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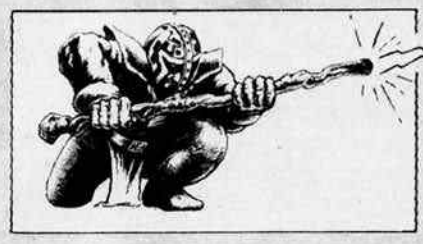
ISSUE #10 MAY 1987



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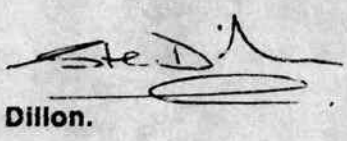
E D I T O R I A L

976. 977. 978. ZZzzz... Wot?! Another issue already? But I haven't finished looking at all those response forms, and my computer's locked in a time-warp calculation. Oh, well, since the Taskmaster's woken me up, let's have a look and see what we've got. There's the final part of **Women In Roleplaying-** that'll please the chauvinists. But I don't think that's the last we've seen of **Janet Vialls**. And there's an article by another woman; that **Ann Broomfield** who did that thingie about poisons in issue #6. Yeah, that was really good.

Hmmm. A scenario for **Call of Cthulhu,** and the **Scat**. fantasy campaign deals with money- that should make a good scenario for my thief character.

I see **Brian Lumley's** back in this issue, and so is **Whiplash**! With a new scriptwriter! Looks better than ever. Ah, but I see **Ian Marsh** has gone. Who's replacing him, then? Me? On page 26? I'll see you there then!



Ste Dillon.

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Who's Afraid Of the BIG BAD WOLF?

BY ANN BROOMFIELD

A Wilderness Enjoyment Guide

INTRODUCTION:

There have been a number of articles recently (well, within the last year or so) on how to make the most of NPCs, both human and non-human. This is great, and I for one read them with interest. But what about our four (or six-, or even 100-) legged friends? Non-sentient creatures, especially the non-magical sort, often get virtually ignored in FRPGs, probably because most GMs aren't experts on animal behaviour and so consider them to be rather dull. For me, the real eye-opener was **Elfquest** (and the first human out there to say *"Aaah! Cute little comicbook elves!"* gets fed to the wolves!). There are no weird monsters on the World of **Two Moons**, just familiar modern fauna plus a few mammoths and sabretooths, and as a Zoology graduate, I had no excuse for not knowing how these beasties might respond to pointy-eared adventurers! However, not everyone is a budding **David Attenborough**, so here is a beginner's guide to animal behaviour and ecology for anyone who would like to use our non-sentient friends in a more plausible manner.

HUNTER OR PREY?

Firstly, I suspect that most campaigns have far too many predators and not enough prey. OK, carnivores, and especially man-eaters, seem more frightening- it is quite understandable that humans, as top carnivores in many food chains, should have this nagging fear that something out there wants to eat **them**. But for the most part, this is sheer paranoia. Admittedly, a few people are eaten every year by tigers in India, but the victims are generally terrified peasants, not armed men (which is what most adventurers are, after all). Any intelligent predator (and evolution ensures that most are more intelligent than their prey) is quite capable of recognising a competent opponent when it sees one, and will probably steer well clear. For example, a healthy adult moose is a pretty powerful creature armed with hefty hooves and horns. It has a very good chance of holding off a pack of wolves, because these 'bloodythirsty killers' have the sense not to risk severe injury; even if a wounded wolf survives, the pack's hunting ability is greatly reduced and they may **all** starve. For this reason, most predators prey only on the weak, the sick, the old or the very young- after all, if they were invincible, their prey would soon die out and the predators too would become extinct. So who's afraid of the big bad wolf now?

On the other hand, it is easy to dismiss herbivores as placid vegetarians. This is a grave mistake (sometimes literally!). Admittedly, people are at little risk from deer and such like because unlike other animal predators, people can kill without even coming within range of horns or hooves, and the prey normally only fights back when absolutely necessary. However, there are other species that have taken to heart the saying that "the best means of defence is attack". The first example to spring to mind is the rhino, but others can be found nearer home. The traditional Medieval boar hunt was a hazardous affair to say the least; a fully-grown male boar weighs 400-750 lbs, has a tremendously thick hide and is armed with razor-sharp tusks that have been known to slice off a hunting dog's tail with almost surgical precision. Even our domesticated animals, most familiar in the form of the placid female or neuter (eg. gelding, ox), have males of considerable ferociousness. Bulls are notoriously dangerous, but

stallions, boars and even rams can also turn nasty. In short, one can't assume that an amimal is not deadly just because it has no intention of eating you. So, perhaps we should be afraid of the three little pigs instead?

However, to consider animals only in the light of whether or not they will attack adventurers is to short-change your players. Animals exhibit a wide range of behaviour that can be used to provide atmosphere, to give the players clues, or simply to create a less run-of-the-mill encounter to amuse or interest.

The notes below summarise a number of behavioural patterns and suggest their game use. The basic ideas can be used to determine monsters' actions too - even the weirdest monster usually has some reason for acting as it does.

ATMOSPHERE:

Often, the mere presence of animals can add to the atmosphere of a good game- anything that lends itself toward realism does this, whether it be explicit details of the surrounding countryside or a detailed character portrait of the battle-scarred NPC the party are bartering with.

Think of your average day; how often does a day go by when you don't see a gang of dogs chasing each other, or when you're not threatened by a particularly ferocious bulldog, or you have to do 'the doggie dance' through town to avoid spoiling your new shoes? These are all realities, details which can give the GM amusement, a brief respite whilst he's preparing his players for a real encounter, and they all add to the atmosphere of a good game. Those who have played the scenario **CATS** in **Adventurer #9** will be aware of the heightened sense of paranoia caused just by the presence of our feline friends. Or the increased palpitations and adrenalin caused when, as you're crawling through a low-roofed cavern, there is a sudden rush of scurrying feet, or the flapping of dark shapes clashing into your face- bats and rats both increase the players' fear levels, especially if in sufficient numbers.

THREAT DISPLAYS:

Combat is a risky business, so many animals delay the dreadful moment (or avoid it entirely) by elaborate displays. These are normally intended for members of its own species, but could just as easily be used against unfamiliar and therefore potentially threatening creatures, eg. a party of unsuspecting adventurers. The display usually involves the animal trying to look as big and fearsome as it can. In small animals (such as a guinea pig) this may appear merely amusing, but in a large beast it can be genuinely terrifying. Imagine the prospect of a **hippogriff** rearing up and clawing at the air whilst flapping its wings and screeching deafeningly. If the threat doesn't work, the creature may well turn and run, although this response cannot be guaranteed (most animals above the level of fish have some degree of individuality). In any event it gives the threatener a few moments to assess the situation whilst its opponent hesitates.

LURES:

A common trick for a mother with eggs or young is to lure predators away by feigning vulnerability. If a party are following a trail (which happens to run past a nest of young) and simultaneously looking out for lunch on the hoof, they might be lured astray by just such a trick and perhaps get lost. Of course a character with an **Animal Lore** skill may be able to see through the ruse and guess that there are more vulnerable prey nearby.

MATING:

Some female animals behave very strangely whilst on heat; calling seductively, rolling around on the floor or nuzzling any large object (treetrunks, sleeping adventurers, etc.). Male animals can behave almost as strangely; many fight rivals in flamboyant but seldom fatal skirmishes. Up to 30 male squirrels may chase a single female through the trees until the leading male drives her to exhaustion. Some insects and spiders carefully prepare gifts for their ladylove to avoid being eaten themselves (although sometimes there is nothing inside the fancily- gift-wrapped box!). The possibilities for amusement, danger, or just complete bafflement are endless, especially if one invents bizarre behaviour to suit weird monsters.

SURPRISE:

This isn't so much a trait of behaviour as an idea for GMs. The adventurers are walking along a forest path. Suddenly an animal crashes from the undergrowth, dashes across the path, and disappears into the bushes. Is there a fearsome predator nearby? Is this the first hint of the stampede that heralds the forest fire? Is the beast mad with rabies? Or is it just plain skittish? Whatever the answer, it will probably stop the players from falling asleep.

ALARMS:

Many species have special calls that warn others of their kind of approaching danger (I'm sure most readers will have heard the warning "chuk-chuk-chuk-!" of a blackbird as it flees their approach). This is another one that could be very useful to PCs, and makes a change from the clichéd deadly silence, adding an element of cautious anticipation to those on watch duty overnight in an otherwise secluded, eerie, silent wood...

MOBBING:

Small birds often gang up on predatory birds (usually owls, but also magpies) in an attempt to drive them away. Such behaviour could again be a warning of nearby predators, or perhaps a friendly creature, or even the PCs themselves could be treated this way.

Like NPCs, most animals have far more sense than we generally give them credit for. I recently read a book called **'Cry Wolf'**, in which an Inuit wolf-shaman claimed to be able to understand the wolves' long-distance howls. Not only did he really seem to be able to do this, but the wolves' speech was surprisingly complex; they could convey such subtle messages as "The Hunting's good here. I won't be home until midday."

Good Hunting!

STANDARD

The ever popular **'Cry Havoc'** game, now part of a whole series of interchangeable wargames, was originally sold at wargames conventions in a zip-lock bag. The demand was so unprecedented that it was re-issued in a boxed version and **Standard Games** was born.

Each of the characters in the **Cry Havoc** game is represented by a card counter illustrated with a full colour picture and his or her name. It wasn't very long before some players

New - Large Bolt Thrower with Dwarf Crew
Painted by Mike Willis.

B21 - *Mon-Oger*
Shaman with Vulture
Standard
Painted by Mike Willis.

D1 - *Dwarf with Repeating*
Crossbow
Painted by Mike Willis.

MINIATURES

started to use 25mm miniatures instead of the counters to add even more individuality, and it was quite a natural progression for Standard to release their own models especially suitable for their games.

The **Standard Miniatures** range has expanded steadily since it was started in early 1985 and now has a wide range of Medieval types in both 25mm and 15mm scales.

The figures shown here all come from the **Age of Dark Blades** fantasy ranges which complement the **Dark Blades** skirmish game, but are obviously suitable for most Fantasy Roleplaying Games and accompanied by the mounted figures and chariot, make particurlarly good armies for fantasy wargames (Standard also include set fantasy armies on their lists).

Their own F.R.P.G. **'Dragonroar'** is also now supplied in 25mm scale, which includes the notorious **War Hedgehog** and

B37 - *Mon-Oger Chieftain's Chariot*
Painted by Martyn Tetlow.

Killer Penguin!

Most of the fantasy figures were designed by **Steve Tricket**, but other designers are used on other ranges and Standard are always willing to consider any new high quality design, so if you think you have a talent for producing original work, you could probably do worse than drop them a line.

Their next major release will be a **Great Horned Dragon,** which, weighing in at 1.3Kg (!) Standard believe this will be the largest dragon model available anywhere.

A Mon-Oger Battle Chariot and various Mon-Oger Tiger riders are also produced in this range.

E2 - *Forest Elf Princess with Battle Trophy*
Painted by Martyn Tetlow.

Part V: Summing Up
By Janet Vialls

More Deadly than the Male

A FEMALE FUTURE:

I Have Seen the Future - and it **Is** Female.

This month, the final column in my series on Women and Roleplaying, I'm covering a number of bits and pieces I've previously missed. Firstly, I'm going to turn to the "poor relation" of rolegaming, the science fiction game. The Science Fiction games are, I'm afraid, often just as sexist as their fantasy brethren, which strikes me as somewhat odd. On the face of it, there is even less excuse for a **science fiction** society being biased on grounds of **sex** than in a **fantasy** society.

In a technologically-advanced society, women are at least as capable of pushing buttons or reading VDUs as men; why shouldn't women fly starships or handle lasers alongside the men? In a technological society, differences in physical strength are largely irrelevant.

Unfortunately, not all science fiction writers seem to have realised this. These writers, (even, I am sorry to say, some female ones), are often technologically very inventive, but socially conservative, and assume that society will always consist of men doing things, with women on the side-lines (if they are there at all). Prime culprits in my library include **Poul Anderson, James Blish, 'Doc' Smith, Jack Vance, Andre Norton, Anne McCaffrey,** and **AE Van Vogt** to pick only the major names. For that matter, there are a few authors, (yes, I am thinking about **Heinlein**) who **ought** to ignore women, since they appear quite incapable of portraying realistic women or understanding female psychology. (Quote from **Friday** - *"Being raped is fine,"* thinks heroine Friday - *"if only the guy doesn't have bad breath."* Need I say more?). This is quite separate from many writers (such as **Arthur C. Clarke!**) who are totally unable to create **any** people with any depth.

However, the reason for this savage attack on parts of the science fiction community is that they have left SF looking like a male preserve, where only men are allowed to be seen doing anything. With a few honourable exceptions, the SFRPG reflect this. Most are based on space operas rather than on the more complex and deep Science Fiction novels. (Fantasy is just the same, actually). Fictional space operas, in the main, tend to assume that women are prizes rather than proponents. Many, in fact, are identical to fantasy pulps, with double-talk science replacing magic! However, even in space opera there are exceptions: try **James Schmitz**'s The Witches of Karres. Sometime, I'll write a scenario based on that! The SFRPGs also tend to have an excessively militaristic tone, again borrowed from the space operas. As I said last time, I don't personally think that many women are particularly interested in playing at being soldiers.

RAMBO GAMES!

Traveller is a good example of what is wrong in SFRPGs, and is, unfortunately still the most popular.

1. Firstly, it forces all characters to pass through a military or para-military background, which anarchists like me find somewhat distasteful.

2. Secondly, the skills structure leaves Traveller characters unsuited to anything other than stealing starships and killing people. (Try designing a journalist under the basic Traveller system: unless you create about ten new skills and a new character generator to give the character those skills, it is impossible. This is stupid!!)

3. Thirdly, supplements such as **Mercenary** seem to stress that the emphasis is on powerful weapons systems such as plasma guns and powered armour to the exclusion of all else. The basic feel seems designed not to appeal to women, but simply to adolescent Rambos.

Traveller also exhibits one very common trait in Science Fiction rules: paying lip service to equality, but no more. Rules often state that women should be treated equally to men, but then set about ignoring women or tactically assuming that men are the only people that matter. Another beautiful example is **Paranoia**. *"There are no sex distinctions in the complex"*.

Oh yes? Find an illustration in which the women out-number, or even equal the men. Tokenism rules! For that matter, why do the rules assume that Ultra Violets will be male? (Spot the reference, on page 32 in the Games Workshop printing, to UVs keeping harems! The fact that it is the **concubines** having the children shows that it is the men who are the UVs). Really, all I'm saying is that Science Fiction game designers ought to show a bit more imagination!

THE UNBIASED SOCIETY:

Clearly, in a science fiction society, it ought to be possible to approach the Utopia of any unbiased society. To be fair to the SF community, there are some novels where such societies do exist, at least to an extent. **Niven**'s *'Known Space'* is a good example, as are the books of **Robert Silverberg** or **Vonda McIntyre**, or **Ursula LeGuin**'s *'The Dispossessed'*. The problem for the referee is simply one of habit. The normal assumption is that a character is male; it is very easy to end up with a 90% male cast of NPC's, only using women in exceptional circum- stances. My suggestion to referees is that they roll a d6 whenever designing a character; if the roll is even, the character is female. (I normally don't go in for dice rolling when designing NPCs, but here it could be useful to help break the male bias). After all, in an unbiased society, the numbers of active men and women will be equal:

So the numbers of characters encountered should be equal. Another interesting exercise is to write a scenario or two assuming that all the NPCs are female, unless there are extremely good plot reasons for making them male. Such a scenario could be run in a Science Fiction campaign with absolutely no comment from the referee, just to see if the players notice.

On a more positive note, there are some systems other than Traveller which are more to my liking. The recent **Ringworld** game is mechanically one of the best systems around. Its emphasis on characterisation, and on skills other than combat, should have opened new possibilites for Science Fiction gaming, certainly in areas more interesting to female gamers. Unfortunately, the 'Known Space' background was just too safe and orderly to write scenarios for, and games set on the ring itself risk quickly degenerating into a pseudo-fantasy structure. As a result, the game has not sold well.

Dystopias are far more interesting, and far easier to write scenarios for. If you design a society where part of the unpleasantness is sexual bias, decide **why** the bias is there. All too often, scenario designers simply assume that men will be in charge. If you want to be sexist, justify your stance! For example, a particular society might demand that women be subservient to men on the basis of the local religion. (A technological society can still be strongly religious - think about Heinlein's **Revolt In 2100**, or Leiber's **Gather, Darkness!**). In another example, a post holocaust society (assuming you can justify such a thing existing) might well hold male domination as responsible for the disaster, and therefore keep careful rein on its men.

THE TYRANNY OF PREGNANCY:

Think about the effects of the sex differences on a future society. In societies such as in Huxley's **Brave New World**, reproduction and sex may have been separated; this is one method that ought to lead to women being free to take any role that a man can take. On the other hand, it may well de-humanize that society. In societies where there is some form of immortality, or simple very long life spans, child-birth will be far less important. Again, women will be freed to an extent from the tyranny of pregnancy. This is a dangerous road to take; immortality is one factor guaranteed to alter the very nature of society. Think carefully about the effects! One aspect of all this will be fertility control; where a women is in perfect control of her own fertility, she is far freer to choose her own goals. Similarly, if men have control of their fertility, they are less vulnerable to forms of emotional blackmail (see Vonda McIntyre's **Dreamsnake** for more details). In either case, the birth of an unwanted child is likely to be a disgrace to BOTH partners.

Less pleasant societies (such as that of **Paranola**) may seek to limit a citizen's sexuality, so that drugs curb sexual demand. This could result in men and women being treated precisely identically, since any physical difference will be unimportant. Physical differences might even have been bred out, leaving a race of hermaphrodites or asexuals. I personally don't like this idea: it would create a particularly dull world!

Finally, there is always scope for really strange societies. This is not an area for hard and fast rules; all I can do is suggest examples of the societies that are possible, if a referee is prepared to be adventurous. The first example is the Kzinti (from Larry Niven's **Known Space**), where one sex is non-sentient. (Why Niven had to decide that the non-sentient sex would be female I do not know. Shame. My experience suggests that, in our world, more men are non-sentient than women...)

The second type are the people of **The Left Hand of Darkness**, Ursula LeGuin's superbly evocative exploration of a trans-sexual society.

(If you haven't read it, go out and buy it NOW). Setting a scenario on **Winter** is an exercise I recommend only to experienced referees.

My third suggestion is the Tyrenni, from James Tiptree's **Up the Walls of the World**, which I mentioned earlier in the series. Again, characters, especially the adolescent Rambos, who contact the Tyrenni are in for an interesting experience.

HISTORICAL GAMES:

Games set in a more or less accurate historical background provide serious problems for the feminist, since historical accuracy rears its ugly head. I freely admit that some societies were extremely sexist, and that there is little a referee or player can do about this. Part of the interest in these games comes from the realistic historical background. The ultimate example is probably **'Privateers and Gentlemen'**, where female characters are virtually impossible. On the other hand, don't let 'Historical accuracy' prevent the appearance of **any** female characters in historical games. Throughout history there have been a few maverick women, ranging from **Boudicca** through **Jeanne D'Arc** to the Victorian travelling ladies right up to the **suffragettes**. There is no reason why a female character should step outside the norm, though she may well suffer serious pressures. The women who **do** break away from the norm are likely to be extremely interesting and strong personalities. Make the most of the opportunities, and take care with designing them: let the quality of female characters make up for the lack of quantity. For that matter, don't forget that the typical women of those societies were still **people**, with their own feelings, aims and personalities. I find it particularly important to develop detailed and interesting personalities for female characters in more sexist societies, simply to remind players that the women do exist.

Whilst on the edge of historical games, I ought to mention **Pendragon**. Pendragon is clearly a fantasy game - but its feel, and the insistence on its background justifies its inclusion here. The two problems with Pendragon, so far as I am concerned, are firstly that it largely seems to ignore warrior maidens (such as Spenser's **Britomart**), and secondly its assumption that wives are only for the production of heirs, rather than having any major importance in themselves. As a referee, I find the statement that wives may be left nameless and characterless incomp-

rehensible. Why waste all those scenario opportunities?

SEX AND THE SINGLE ADVENTURESS:

To return to fantasy games. I want to deal briefly with a problem that many male gamers have told me (usually with the self satisfied grin of one making an unanswerable point) justifies the exclusion of female adventurers. The problem is that of sex and, in particular, contraception. The argument runs that any female leading the lifestyle of a typical fantasy hero is likely to rapidly end up pregnant, and be forced into early retirement. (The men, presumably, neither know nor care about their own children. A mean referee could probably find interesting ways of reminding them of their existence. It rather detracts from the image of a tough barbarian to find himself left, literally, holding the baby!) First of all, there is no reason that the lifestyle of an adventuring woman will be identical to that of a man. Secondly, any reasonably intelligent woman who chose to live in that way could take precautions. Contrary to popular opinion, contraception was not invented in the twentieth century, even in the 'real world'. Indeed, the women in many 'primitive' societies knew that certain plants could reduce their chances of becoming pregnant. (Such secrets were often unknown to their men-folk, who would have feared such an assertion of female power. This partly explains why such things were not always discovered by the mainly male, early explorers). Somewhat closer to home, doesn't every folk-lore village wise woman have the power to control a woman's fertility? **'Barrenness'** is amongst the commonest of her **'curses'**. In the context of a fantasy campaign, where magic in general works, such powers whether 'herbal' or 'spell-like' in nature, ought to be extremely effective. It is certainly something which should have been included in WD's Houri spell list! Furthermore, in a society where disease and the rest are kept in check by magic, smaller families are likely to be the norm, and some form of contraception is likely to be the essential, since infant mortality rates will be lower. (**AD&D:** think about the effects of **Purify Food and Drink** and **Create** (clean) **Water** in the hands of lowly village priestesses, let alone **Cure Disease** and the rest that more powerful clerics can call on).

Of course, there may still be social or religious objections to the use of such methods, especially in a strongly patriarchal culture. However, it is also possible in a society where relationships between men and women are particularly formal, that the men would be unaware of what their women are doing. Such matters only add to the interest and variety within a game...

GENDER AS A CENTRAL MOTIVATION:

It is quiet possible to use gender differences as a major force within a campaign. All games need sources of conflict, and the 'sex war' certainly has possibilities here! For instance, our campaign world includes two cities which are in a semi-permanent state of undeclared war. One is an 'Amazon style' matriarchy. the other is the holy city of a religion that holds the inferiority of women as one of its central tenets! A referee probably needs to take care when introducing such an overt manifestation of the sex war into his/her campaign. Not all players will be happy with such a structure, and some may find it a little close to the bone. It may be sometimes necessary for the referee to remind players that the attitudes of the campaign societies are not necessarily the GM's own! On the other hand, a sex war **does** provide an interesting background, with plenty of opportunities for PCs to take sides. Making neither society totally good or totally evil can make these choices more complex than they might first appear. One risk, of course, is that a mixed party will be split along gender lines. Again, giving other characteristics to the society can be helpful here. For example, even the most sexist Druidess could be persuaded to help a patriarchy that has respect for nature, whilst the other is systematically destroying forests. On the other hand, she may set 'interesting' conditions on that aid.

At a more personal level, religions such as the one mentioned above can certainly provide motivations and targets for individual female PCs. A female ranger of my aquaintance is both hunting and hunted by the followers of that particular religion...

Another area where gender can provide motivations is in that of romantic interest. Certainly, a woman might find the rescue of her lover gives her a stronger motivation for becoming involved in a situation than simple greed for treasure. It could also lead to a more interesting and subtle contest than a straight 'kill the monster and steal the treasure' structure. On the other hand, don't assume that **all** relationships between men and women will be sexual, or even romantic. Platonic relationships can also be very deep and long-lasting, and give strong reasons for actions.

Other relationships, equally dependant on gender, can be used similarly. I recently ran a 'rescue the lady' scenario (yes, even I sometimes run things that way round!) in which the lady in question was the mother of one of the PCs. A formidable, forceful, and stubborn lady she is, too, (I decided she was at least partly responsible for those traits in her son) and I've got more plans for her in the future... Other possibilities would involve the mother rescuing or seeking revenge for a child, or brother-sister rivalry (frequently very strong) being at the base of a conflict the PCs are entangled in. There are many other possibilities inherent here.

I'm going to finish with a quote from **Joanna Russ,** which although it was made about writing fantasy/science fiction, applies equally or perhaps even more, to writing scenarios. It comes from the introduction to **The Adventures of Alyx,** published by the Woman's Press.

"Long before I became a feminist in any explicit way, I had turned from writing love stories about women, in which women were losers, and adventure stories about men in which the men were winners, to writing adventure stories about a woman in which the woman won. It was one of the hardest things I ever did in my life."

I hope that, in the rolegaming field at least, these articles have helped make that change of attitude a little less hard.

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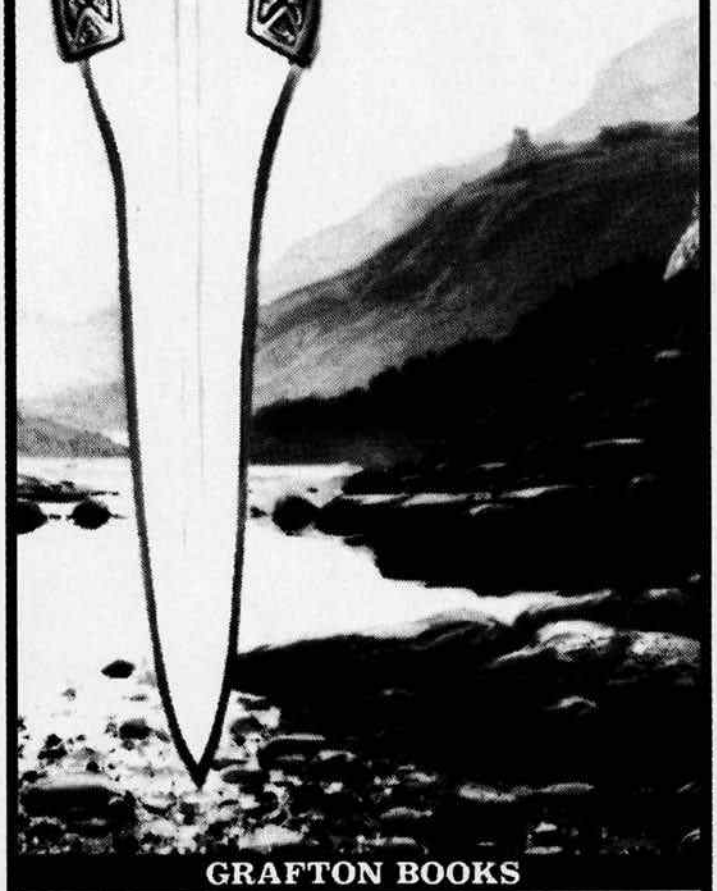

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COINAGE IN ADVENTURER'S FANTASY CAMPAIGN WORLD

Making A Mint

INTRODUCTION:

Motivating his players is always a problem for the conscientious GM; the best form of motivation is that from *within* the player: whether it be a desire for revenge, or a wish to accomplish something, this is surely the heart of a good game. Failing some such *internal* motivation, the one guaranteed method of keepng the players' interest going is to hit them in the pocket- The following is designed to do just that, possibly injecting a little avarice if that is at all necessary. In addition, this is an attempt to overcome some of the problems associated with the varying currencies used in the major RPGs.

"Scatophagium is a frontier town and has been for centuries. Things move slowly in a world where gods shape the people's futures, and where intelligent, supernatural and mighty enemies are to be displaced. Furthermore, humans have been this way before, a slow tide washing over the land in centuries, only to be beaten back by formidable and relentless foes. The seventeen thousand years that have passed since the arrival of human kind on the Prevenient Shore far to the North East have seen at least three such flows and ebbs, and the evidence of previous human and inhuman inhabitants of the land is apparent, if looked for."

-Further notes from ***Incantor Whek's*** *"Perusals of the Continuum"*

As a frontier town and a base for adventuring, Scatophagium finds itself flooded with various currencies. Strange coins and tokens are spent by mariners from far shores, intrepid traders return to town with fancifully shaped ingots appropriated in dealings with demi-humans, and residents of inns settle their bills with silver stamps torn from a sheet of paper, thin metal or a pinch of tiny pearls.

As the town's coffers fill up with assorted monies, confusion and distrust surround most financial dealings. No rate of exchange can be fixed with all these currencies, as new ones appear and others cease to be spent. Amid this atmosphere of anxiety and doubt, Lord Vector's bright idea (with a little help from the **Holy Orthodox**) to establish a uniform currency comes as a ray of hope for the troubled tradesmen. No longer will they have to worry whether the ***Apan fire flep*** piece is worth more or less than the ***Estover Sheckle***. And no longer will Lord Vector or the Holy Orthodox Fundamentalists have to worry about the state of their finances, with wagon loads of unadulterated metal trundling into the Fossick Mint, as the old coinage is exchanged for the new; One in three of these wagonloads effectively unload straight into their pockets.

MONEY CHANGERS:

Whilst adventuring in **Scatophagium**, the players won't be able to miss the notice which is posted at all major crying posts and notice boards, and is also read aloud in public places by officers of the Town's civil service (who are almost exclusively worshippers of **Chessum**, god of Prosperity):-

There are other money changers in Scat. but the ones who are favoured with "approved" rating will of course get the lion's share of the business, not to mention that the others will be operating illegally. Clearly, the 'approved' dealers are those to whom Vector perhaps owes a favour, or who have paid dearly for the privilege.

All the money-changers of Scat. are well defended both magically and physically, but do not maintain a guild of their own.

APPROVED CHANGERS:

•**Osham the Comfortable** serves the centre of town, north of the River.

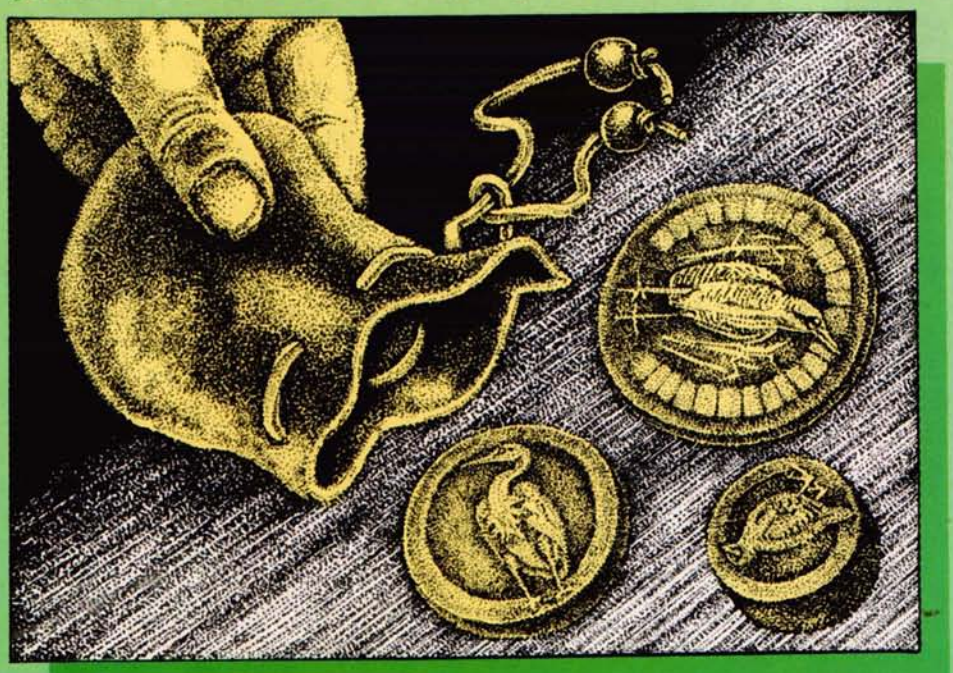
•**Inflamed Wound**, the Barbarian Usurer is in a state of war with the **Brothers Fracture** south of the River.

•**Selim Rupya** is the most influential money-changer on the Straet.

•The **Jon's Son Mathee Bank** is a mercantile concern dealing mostly with Guilds, merchants and soldiers, and is situated near the River Scat. toward the Enceinte (GM: Refer to your maps in issue 5 and 7).

•Nearby is The **Bank of Amber Roses** which serves the Temples and Tradesmen and townsfolk.

•**Discreet Fiscal Transactions** (Scat.) **Ltd**. is a concern run exclusively by the *Holy Orthodox Fundamental* sect of the *Chessumite* religion and a number of offices will be opened in town shortly. This is the



sect that **Vector** adheres to, and it would not be surprising to find out that Lord Vector and the Chessumites control and own Discreet Fiscal Transactions Ltd. as well as the mint.

THE FOSSICK MINT:

This has been established in a large Alchemical workshop close to **Vertex Hall**, at the extreme NE of the Enceinte. The various coins and tokens collected from the town in taxes, fees, tolls, etc. are melted down in the furnaces and re-struck, after the metal is de-based 2-1, as the following 'new coins':-

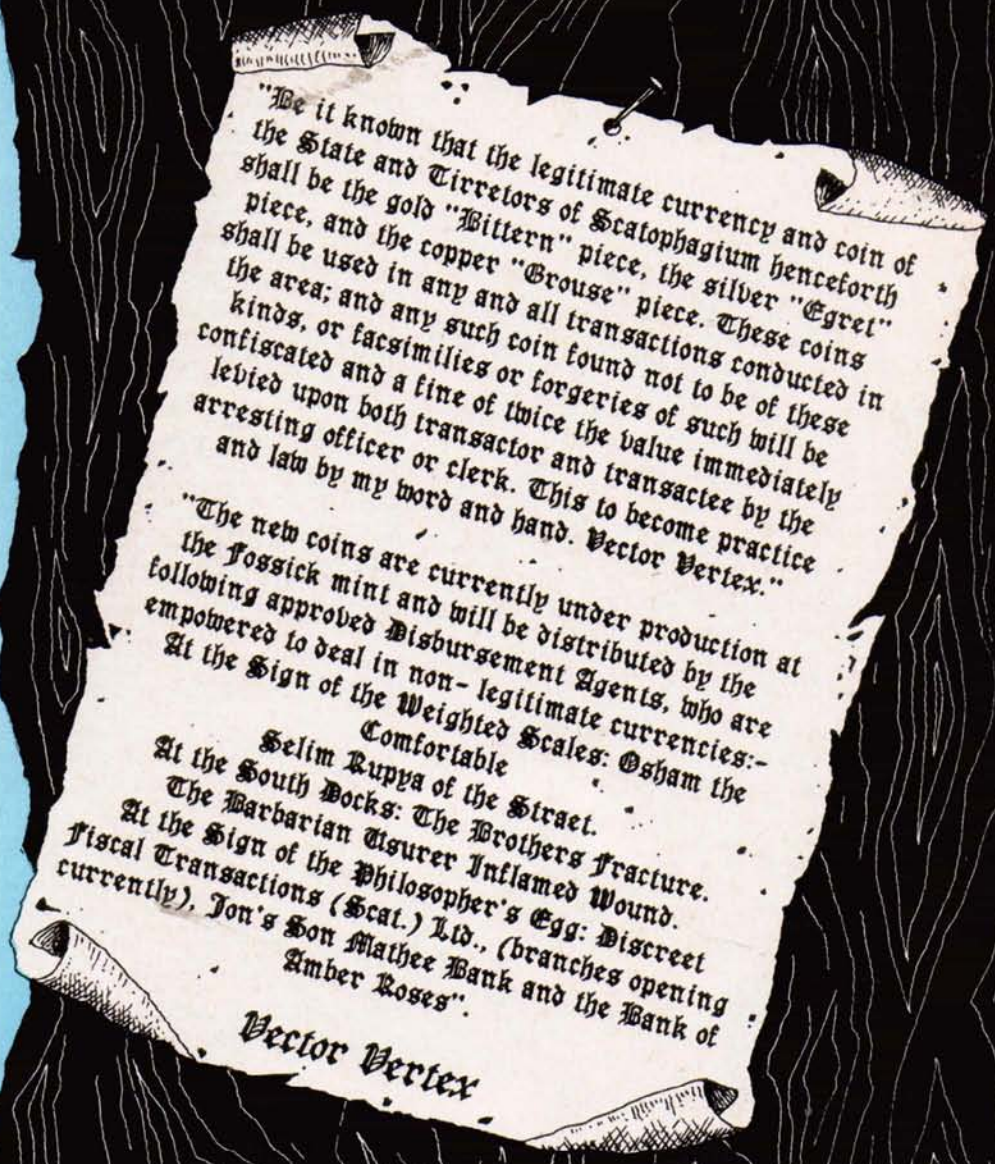
- **Bitterns**- a large golden coin the size of a gingernut with a Bittern bird stamped on one side and a galleon on the other.
- **Egrets**- a silvery coin the size of a 50p. piece with a heron on one side, a plum weight and pair of dividers on the other.
- **Grouse**- a copper plug, crudely fashioned, the size of a bottle top or crown cork, with a vaguely discernible likeness of the gamebird on one side and the double 'V' of Vertex on the other.

All the new coins, for the sake of easy calculation weigh about a tenth of a pound, although the copper coins are a little lighter than the silver, and the silver slightly lighter than the gold. There are ten Grouse to an Egret and ten Egrets to a Bittern:-

1 Bittern = 10 Egrets
1 Egret = 10 Grouse
1 Grouse = not a lot!

Within a week of circulation, the new coins will acquire the local names of "boomer" for the Bittern due to its dull note when dropped or flicked; "Sally" for the Egret due to the tarnish it acquires rather quickly and "plug" or "groat" for the Grouse.

As might be expected, the light brown robes of the **Chessumite** clergy are to be seen throughout Scat. during this period of financial turmoil, and it is fairly certain that these ubiquitous priests will make it their business to see that the new laws are not flouted, and that the new coinage is used. Town officials and guards will also see that no illegitimate currencies are used, assisted by informants, spies and general busibodies, eager for a more wholesome reward.


"Be it known that the legitimate currency and coin of the State and Tirretors of Scatophagium henceforth shall be the gold "Bittern" piece, the silver "Egret" piece, and the copper "Grouse" piece. These coins shall be used in any and all transactions conducted in the area; and any such coin found not to be of these kinds, or facsimilies or forgeries of such will be confiscated and a fine of twice the value immediately levied upon both transactor and transactee by the arresting officer or clerk. This to become practice and law by my word and hand. Vector Vertex."
"The new coins are currently under production at the Fossick mint and will be distributed by the following approved Disbursement Agents, who are empowered to deal in non- legitimate currencies:-
At the Sign of the Weighted Scales: Osham the Comfortable
Selim Rupya of the Strait.
At the South Docks: The Brothers Fracture.
The Barbarian Usurer Inflamed Wound.
At the Sign of the Philosopher's Egg: Discreet Fiscal Transactions (Scat.) Ltd., (branches opening currently), Jon's Son Mathee Bank and the Bank of Amber Roses".
Vector Vertex

THE MONEY WAGON:

Transportation of large amounts of money has always proved to be a problem; certain spells might be effective, but could the caster be trusted? Might the spell misfire? Flying is not a viable plan due to the vulnerability of flying creatures and the weight involved. In the end, Lord Vector has decided that the answer is a straightforward, secure moveable receptical, an armoured wagon, fortified with whatever magical wards and guards that are possible, useful and cheap enough not to make too big a hole in the profits.

A dozen loyal volunteers will accompany the wagon, and at least one officer will be in charge, possibly assisted by one or more spell users, disguised as handlers or drivers. The wagon has the added advantage of being very cumbersome and would prove very difficult to steal.

The wagon is a sturdy (1/2" thick) steel peak-roofed box with a rear door, secured on the inside by a complicated lock, operated by the guard inside who responds to a correct signal from the outside. It is 6' long, 5' high and 4' wide, weighs about two and a half tons, and is pulled by two draft horses. Two drivers sit at the front and one guard hangs on the rear. The accompanying force will not allow an approach to be made within 10' of the wagon, and the door, measuring 2' x 3' will only be open for the minimum amount of time; there is a small grill in the door. The amount of cash in the wagon will remain fairly constant as it does its rounds. Bitterns, Egrets and Grouse are taken from the Fossick Mint and are exchanged for the other currencies from approved agents *en route*. The total quantity may be from 10,000 to 50,000 coins, possibly more, but the wagon's defence force should increase proportionally if the GM wants it to contain more cash.

SCENARIO HOOKS:

Anyone wishing to pay for items or services in Scat. will, of course, have to visit a money changer and obtain some of the new currency, or deal illegally. There is a 50% chance of any non-Chessumite inhabitant of Scat. accepting other currencies so long as they are approached fairly discreetly and the currency is of sufficient value. But of course, not all of Chessum's worshippers wear the brown robes of the priests. In fact, not all the priests do. There will, however, usually be some clue, either a ring with the symbol of the scales engraved on it, or the deliberate closing of a book and placing of a pen upon it. These signs are shown to let other Chessumites know of their allegiances without alerting worshippers of other gods. But they may be noticed anyway. Another sign, a verbal one, which a Chessumite may say is "...it all helps to balance the books". The correct response to this is "It must all add up in the end". Among merchants, there's a 60% chance he will be a Chessumite, among tradesmen this is 40%, mercenary soldiers only 10% and town volunteer soldiers 15%. Clerks and officials are 80% Chessumite, and peasants only 2%. Any approach made to a Chessumite involving an illicit deal will almost certainly lead to the offender being reported, arrested or denounced at the very least.

Discreet Fiscal Transactions will open offices in Chessumite Temples (surprised?!) and give better rates of exchange to members of their own religion. This can either be of use to the players (if they're Chessumite) or frustrating and annoying if they find out that Chessumites are getting it cheaper than they are!)

The money changers get the new coins weight for weight from the wagon, and then supply them to their customers with as much 'mark-up' or profit as they can get away with (average about 20% profit). Thus a character wishing to exchange a pound and a half of good silver coins for Egrets might get as many as twelve for his money, but the money changer will be able to exchange the good silver for fifteen Egrets from the wagon. It might be easier to work it out on a commission basis where the trade is done on a weight-for-weight basis exchange with the customer, and then 25% (or so) charged for the service.

The new coins are supposed to be of a similar value to the old coinages, and have the same buying power. Thus a Bittern will buy a lavish meal in a posh eatery, or a night's lodging at an above-average inn, or get someone totally legless in most taverns. But, as the new coins are introduced, prices will be increased by the traders and merchants to account for the commissions paid and the loss of worth experienced by the traders when buying from non-residents of the town, also to take into account the loss of personal savings.

Opportunities will of course be seen by the less lawful members of society to avail themselves of some of this wealth. Despite dire threats of terminal punishments, counterfeiting will be rife, 'alternative mints' being established in a number of hidden cellars in **Stump's Patch** and around the docks. The coins from these operations will be of varying quality and purity, and may be offered to characters at attractive rates or find their way into players' possession without their knowledge amongst change, etc. The forgery may be noticed at some later point when the player attempts to spend it.

No arrangements have been made to exchange Bittens, etc. for other currencies, and a poor rate of exchange will be had for them outside Scat. One may still buy gems and jewellery with the coins, but the increase in prices will, in this case, be at a maximum (up to 100%, but more likely around 50 -60%)

THE CREDITCOIN CAPER:

Hasty Ralph, a competant but impetuous artificer, and member of **S.T.U.M.P.** experimented to blend alchemical methods and the forgers' craft with a little too much success and came up with the **Creditcoin**, which has the amazing effect of gaining the possessor unlimited credit as long as he is in the immediate vicinity. Once the possessor of the coin leaves the presence of those whom he has taken goods or services from, the effects wear off and they may realise their mistake. A person won't be affected twice, unless they are extremely gullible.

Having discovered the effects of the coin, which resembles a Bittern but has a spiral design, Ralph was making good use of it when the gods decided that his innovation was a little too scientific for their liking, and they reduced him to a vegetable (rather like a green pepper, only Ralph-shaped). An urchin discovering the 'corpse' duly picked the pockets and discovered the creditcoin. Recognising it as non-legal tender, the urchin got his big sister to change it at **Selim Rupya's**.

The only person other than Ralph to know of the coin's powers is his mother, **Collumbine**, who is of strange stock and possesses a limited clairvoyant ability. Discovering what remained of her son in the secluded alley behind their home, she receives the image of the urchin, who is known to her. After patient questioning, he has told her what has happened to the coin. Now Collumbine intends to retrieve it. She will need help, but cannot involve her son's fellow members of S.T.U.M.P. as Selim Rupya pays hefty sums to them. Any member of the Scatophagium Thieves Union for Mutual Protection would be cast out of the guild if they hit Selim's, although one or two might risk it...

Collumbine, although of advancing years, has kept spry and agile, and is still adept with the staff as a weapon, even though it is now used predominantly as a walking stick.

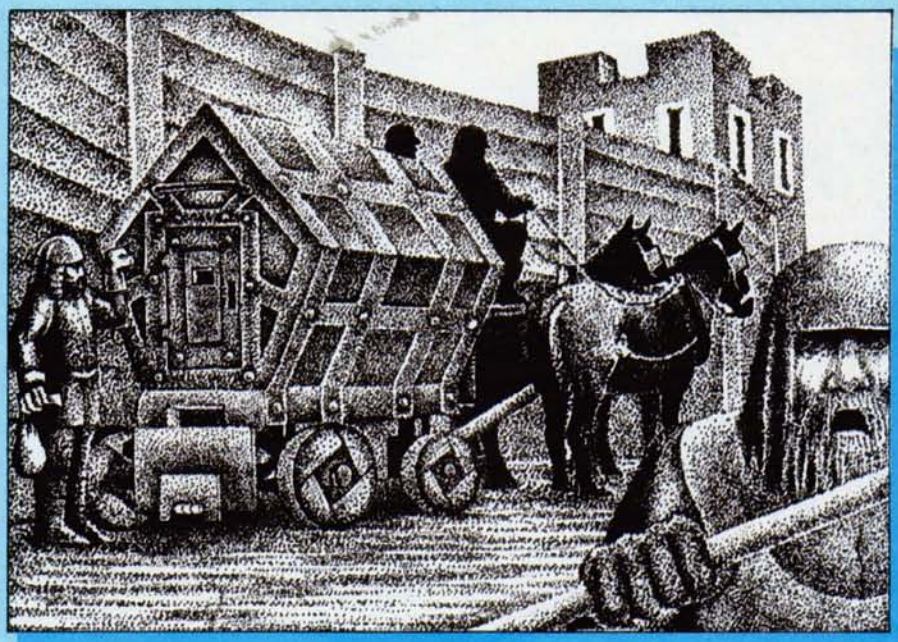
The armoured wagon delivers the Bitterns etc. in exchange for foreign coins once a week, which will cause Collumbine to make haste, for if Selim has not discovered the coin's properties, it will be stored somewhere within the Money Broker's, possibly to be sent to the mint the next time the wagon calls.

Lord Vector pays no large sums to S.T.U.M.P. and therefore the wagon will be seen as fair game by the thieves guild. An attempt to rob or heist might be made directly after its call to Selim Rupya's place, so as not to disrupt the moneychanger's business. The wagon does a round of the approved moneychangers establishments, calling at Selim Rupya's first, and then travelling south over the river. East of the Straet, the thieves are thickest and more than one enterprising band might have the same idea. S.T.U.M.P. take 10% from members; 100% from non-members!

For security reasons, an occasional

dummy or decoy run may be made in the armoured wagon. All will proceed as normal, with heavy bags being taken in and out, passer-bys kept clear, etc.

If the wagon is robbed then retribution will be swift by Vector; Searches and arbitary arrests will follow, rewards offered and informers paid, coercion and force will be brought to bear in areas deemed likely to yield results.



Ospin the Quick, a high ranking but maverick member of S.T.U.M.P. plans to take the wagon by force and trickery, just as soon as conditions are right. This could pre-empt or clash with plans laid by criminally inclined characters, or involve players in the mayhem.

Collumbine may approach players for assistance, or they may stumble upon Ralph's remains, even as his mother is trying to "read" what has happened.

Fent is obnoxious when drunk, and may take a dislike to any character for no good reason, if he encounters them in the **Looming Gloom** for instance. He might cause problems for them if they have to visit the money broker's. **Cullough** is a little trigger happy.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:
Non Player Characters:-

SELIM RUPYA- Money changer, Usurer, banker, financer. He is a stout man of later middle years, and dresses lavishly and adorned with jewellery. Of middle height and slightly overweight, **Selim** has invested a portion of his considerable wealth in magical protection for his premises, family, and person. He has a grand moustache, which he takes great pride in, and speaks with a slight eastern accent. Another portion of his wealth is invested in 'Insurance' ('protection' in less polite circles) thus he is relatively secure in relation to the thieves' guild S.T.U.M.P. He is generally friendly and approachable, but an extremely shrewd businessman, who dislikes merchants and priests (nevertheless, he has become a Holy Orthodox Fundamentalist, presumably for business reasons).

THOO NERRI RUPYA- Selim's wife, she is also slightly overweight but small and attractive, loves children and spending her husband's profits. She reluctantly attends the new Chessumite temple (still under construction but holding services), situated between her house and **Beast Market**, where the head Priest, **Rotwang** holds her in great esteem (his interest in her, is rumoured to be the reason for Selim's 'Approved' status). Selim is devoted to her, and she possesses great personal charm which will be apparent to, and effective upon any character spending more than a little time with her. She is of middle years, a bit younger than Selim.

TADZI RUPYA- the only child of Selim and Nerri, is a tall, lazy youth, who grudgingly helps with the family business. When not working, Tadzi is to be found, usually when it is fine, practising the Formby (a sort of giant ukulele) near the well.

MORE NPCs:

SANVIDOR- Selim's trusted friend and scribe, he is a wiry man, quite a bit younger than his employer. He works diligently and thoroughly, and plays a lot of chess in the evenings with Selim. A dabbler in dark arts, he has formed a romantic attachment to **Cullough**. He is a worshipper of **Manud**.

CULLOUGH- A superb crossbowwoman from distant **Bunberg**. She is employed to guard Selim's property, which she does with two loaded light crossbows at the ready. Tall and fair, she wears light armour when working, and she prefers Sanvidor when he is not working at some conjuration. **Imeprathi**.

FENT- Selim's personal bodyguard, when occasion demands, is muscular and tall, though of middle age. A veteran soldier, he is very fond of the **Looming Gloom's** waves; he is in charge of the security of the premises.

CAPPOL, REFOURNIR, PAULUS and **TED-** These are guards employed by Selim Rupya. They live on the premises, and all except Ted are competent fighters. Ted is the youngest and still training, he shows promise.

OVELOPE CHUNDERGARDENER- The cook, housekeeper and overseer of the two maids, is an avowed spinster of the **Manudian** faith, strict and tidy. She is a very light sleeper.

HINNY and **VERAMM-** Two maids employed for household duties which Ovelope ensures take up nearly all their time.

THE MONEY BROKER's. (See plan) Selim Rupya's establishment has a broad front on the strael. A sign showing a single large coin hangs over the door to his place of business, open during the hours from midmorning to dusk.

1. The shop- This is a large room, divided by a counter built between two pillars. The northern pillar

contains a device similar to a 'dumb-waiter' (a small pulley lift) which emerges under the counter, to bring money up from the cellar (11). When Selim requires cash from his vault during business, he will write the sum required on a slip of paper, and add some marks of his own. He will then put this into the dumb-waiter and release a brake. To the casual observer, it seems as though he is opening a safe, out of the customers' range of vision, and in fact he keeps a number of strong boxes under the counter filled with coppers, which he will unlock and transfer while waiting for the silent lift to bring the required sum. **Sanvidor** frequently assists Selim in the shop and stands in for him when he is not able to be there.

The room is hung with a muslin fabric, which is off-white in colour, which is also stretched across the ceiling, concealing a large opening over the customers' side of the counter.

2. Fento's room- The material in the shop (1) also conceals the door to this room, which is open during business hours, allowing Fent swift access when needed.

3. The Guards' Room- The door to this room is similarly hidden and two of them are always on duty here. **Ted** sleeps in this room.

4. The Guards' Bedroom- This has three beds and the possessions of the three ranking men.

5. The Yard is kept clean and tidy. There is a rain barrel, a bench and double gates surmounted by spikes. Two small but noisy dogs live here.

6. The Stables house two horses (one draught and one riding) in the southern part; a wagon is kept in the centre, and the northernmost room is a store for fodder etc. This building is made of wood.

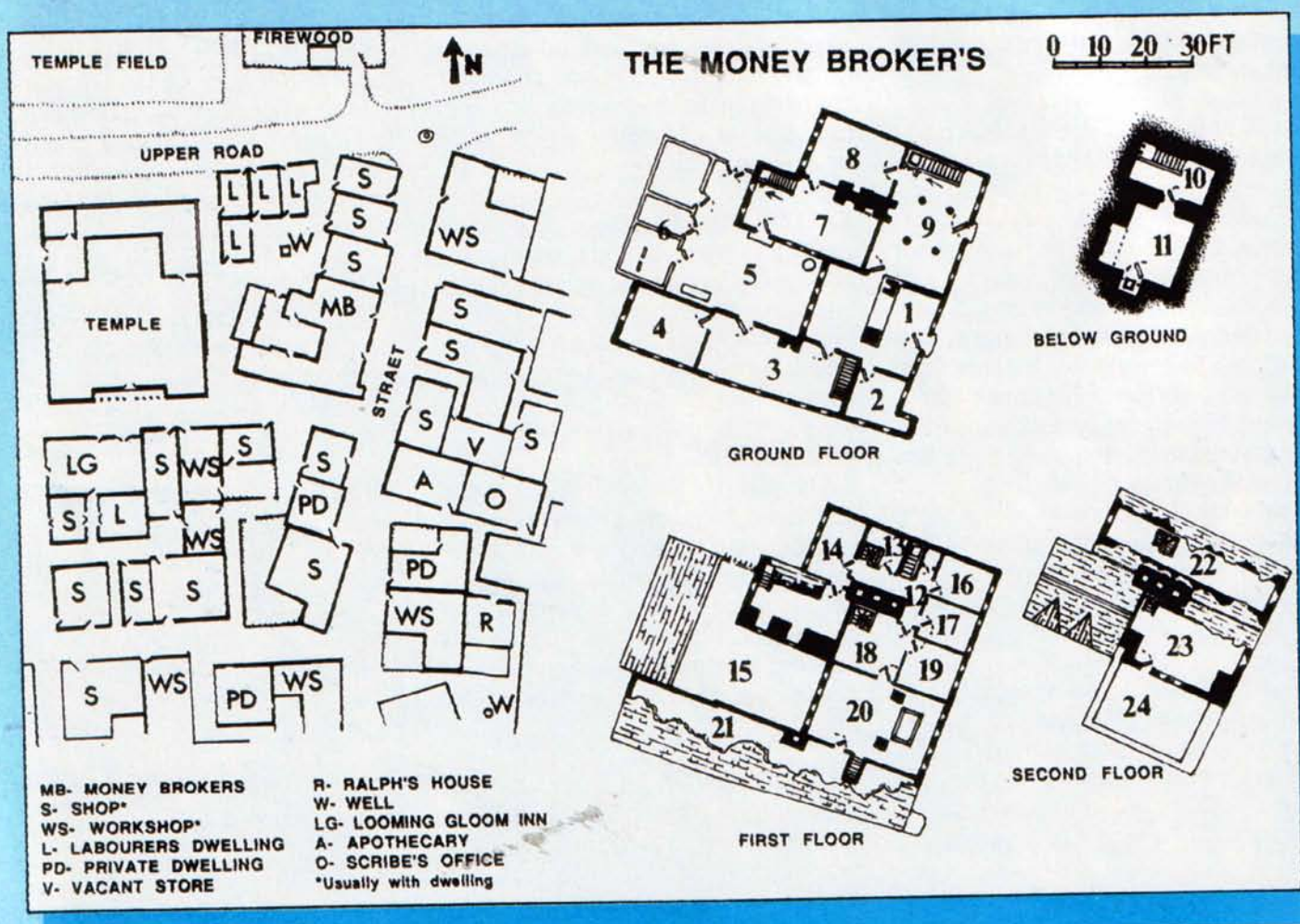
7. The Kitchen- This opens out onto the yard, where from dawn, **Hinny** and **Verram** will be busily working under **Ovelope's** supervision. A steep set of stairs ascend from here to the Girls' Room (15)..

8. The Dining Room is richly furnished with tapestries, heavy oak furniture, framed pictures and carpets. A large oak sideboard contains silverware and is kept locked. Selim and Ovelope both have keys to this and the back door.

9. The Living Room is large, and four decorative pillars support the ceiling. Two sumptuous chairs are set before a grand fireplace. Many other bits of furniture clutter the room. L-shaped stairs lead up from here to the landing (12), and where the carpeted steps make a turn, there is a trap door leading down to the cellar (10). This is well concealed, and requires skill to locate and open. A 3' square passage has a ladder fixed to the wall. In a cupboard beneath the stairs, a large bell hangs, attached to a rope which leads through the floor to the Small Cellar.

10. Small Cellar. Steps lead down from the foot of the ladder to the stone floor. In the small space beneath the stairs is a cot, occupied at night by one of the guards, who take turns at this chilly duty. Over the cot, hangs the rope to which the bell is attached.

A steel door with complicated locks and wards prevents access to the cashroom.



11. The Cashroom. During business hours, either **Tadzi, Sanvidor** or **Nerri** will work down here, sometimes two of them, transferring the cash from the safe to the lift, and vice versa. When there is only one of the above working here, they will be assisted by one of the guards. Only these three can understand the secret marks made by Selim on the notes sent down in the lift. These marks indicate the **denominations** and **quality** of coins to be sent up, the **situation** in the shop, and the **identity** of the customer. Records are kept down here of all transactions, and the workers lock themselves in.

When the shop has closed for the day and the books are balanced (With Selim descending to the cellar to oversee the cashing up), the safe is locked and the traps set.

The safe is a hefty steel box built into an alcove. Apart from its clockwork lock, the safe is protected by three traps;

a). The lock incorporates a **flask of acid** and a **sachet of brainbane**. The sachet is immersed in the acid if the lock's chronometer is advanced or otherwise tampered with, and produces a pungent gas, one whiff of which can cause **hysteria** and **hallucinations**, followed by **unconsciousness**.

b). If a door is opened, without a special retaining pin being inserted in a hole in the wall to the right of the safe, a **heavy iron grating** drops in front of the open door and locks in place.

c). The interior of the safe is about the same size as a large wardrobe, and has eighteen locked drawers, each holding different monies or valuables. When unlocked, each drawer must be pushed in before it is pulled out, in order to remove it without triggering a deluge of **deep-staining glue dye**. The dye will colour anything it contacts, and is extremely difficult to remove. In fact, it only wears off the skin by the shedding of epidermis with time. Scrubbing may help, but a good few layers of skin are affected. The dye is contained in a reservoir hidden above the safe. There is about twelve gallons of the liquid, which if upset, will cascade over the immediate area, splashing beyond.

The door to the south of the cashroom is stout, and locked by night, beyond which is the dumb-waiter and pulley ropes. Also in the cashroom is a table, two chairs, a number of small cash boxes (empty), ledgers, pens, inks, and a large iron chest containing low denomination coins (locked).

The traps and obstacles may be added to, if a greater challenge is desired; a venomous or supernatural guardian might not be out of place.

12. The Landing is 'L' shaped and windowless. A closet beside the stairwell contains bedding and candles. A smaller set of stairs ascends from the landing to the attic (22).

13. Storeroom- This contains some furniture and bolts of cloth.

14. Ovelope's room is spick and span. Sparsely furnished with a hard bed, dressing table, chair, chest and bedside closet. A connecting door leads to the maids' room.

15. The Maids' room is an attic with two dormer windows. **Verram** and **Hinny's** few possessions are kept by their beds. Stairs lead down to the kitchen.

16. Tadzi's Room is untidy and cluttered with half-completed projects and models.

17. The Guest Room is not occupied. There is a bed, cupboard and chair.

18. The Anteroom has steps leading up to **Cullough** and **Sanvidor's** chamber, and is sometimes used by **Selim** and **Sanvidor** when working late. This windowless room has a heavy polished table with a game of chess in progress standing on it. The door to the south is barred at night.

19. Selim and Nerri's Bedroom is well furnished, with two wardrobes, a number of chests, and a large comfortable bed. A dressing table has a trinket box containing low value jewellery. More valuable possessions are kept in the safe.

20. The Workroom is located directly above the shop, with an opening in the floor, and two pillars. The windows are kept shuttered when Cullough is at her post near the opening, during busines transactions. With this room dark and the lower room well lit, Cullough can see all that transpires below without being seen herself. Steps lead down from here to (3), and a small door leads to an **attic storeroom (21)**, where surplus furnishings etc. are kept.

22. The Attic is used by **Nerri** as a workroom, where she makes tapestries and rugs.

23. Sanvidor and Culloughs' chamber is stocked with their gear, including Cullough's weapons (when she's not working) and Sanvidor's grimoires and paraphernalia.

24. A Flat Roof opens out from here, through a door. This is where **Sanvidor** and **Cullough** spend time when it's fine.

GENERAL: All the windows in the house are unglazed, and have heavy internal shutters. The floors downstairs are tiled, whilst upstairs they are varnished wood. The walls are generally plastered and painted white, and hung with pictures, tapestries and hangings.

Knowledge of the traps in the cashroom and how to disarm them is confined to **Selim, Sanvidor** and **Nerri,** and one of these is always last out at night, and first in in the morning.

Selim has a large keyring with him when he is not working. During business hours, whoever is working in the cashroom has these keys. Nerri has a duplicate set hidden in a plastered-over cavity in the wall of the attic (22).

THIEVES:

For GMs wishing to run this adventure as a one-off, it is recommended that you use the following NPCs. If not, the players could always do with the extra pair of hands and/or expertise, especially if set in **Scatophagium** and the PCs aren't used to the town.

ONE-HAND MIKE:

This guy is a bit of a rogue; he's been around for a long time and has seen the other side of Scat. justice many times. He is mainly renowned for his safe-cracking abilities, which he can accomplish successfully without explosives or listening devices. Basically, he is asisted by a magic charm, which he holds in his left hand

whilst making an attempt on the safe (or other locked compartment, such as the wagon). He is successful 65% of the time with the most difficult locks, but his skill is enough to match most simple devices (95%). **Mike** lost his right hand whilst recovering the charm from a wizard's strong-box using a form of dynamite. Without the charm, he is only half as good as he was. He is a very difficult man to contact, but easy to spot, and doesn't come cheaply to hire. Unshaven, hardened and downright thorough.

THE FACE MAN:

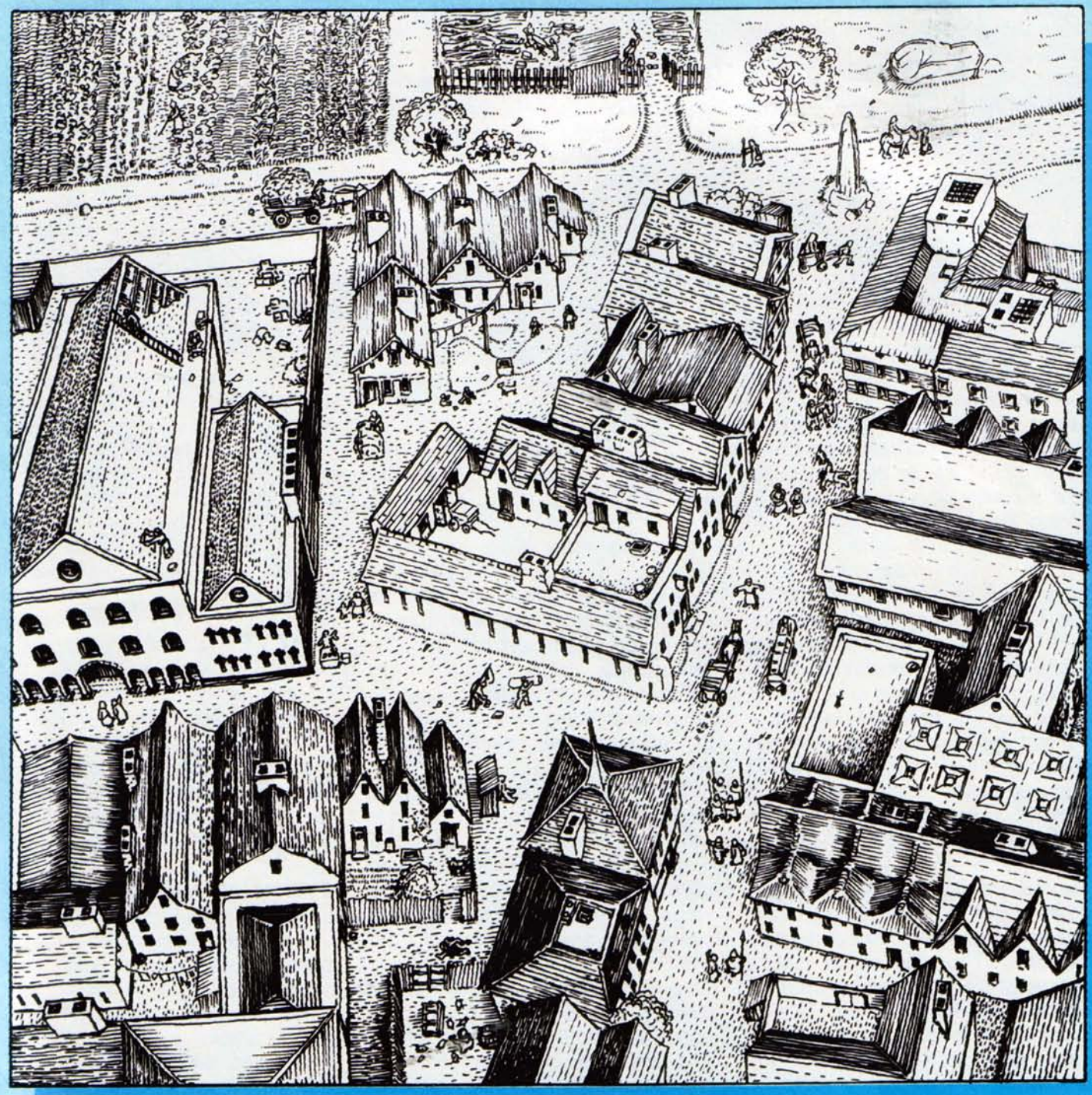
This guy is your average professional con-man, who relies heavily on disguise and his charming good looks and manners. He is often used to infiltrate the guard system when attempting big robberies (such as the money wagon), but if his disguise is ever blown, he is well known to the Scat. militia. He is usually very expensive to hire, but can be bartered down in price if the job is challenging enough (he loves a good opportunity to prove he's the best). Smooth, slick and extremely professional. A tactician all the way. Impossible to get hold of, he'll contact you if the job is right.

ZED:

A downright psycopathic assassin type who loves being in on the action. Unstable but very effective if you need some strong-arm tactics. Readily available and very, very cheap (You might get him to do a job on the promise of an ice-lolly).

MAN WITH NO NAME:

The *dirty Harry* of the bunch, this guy sees himself as a persecuted fall-guy for society and the Scat. government. He's a rebel, and is always on the look-out for a way to get back at **Vector Vertex**. He's quite easy to get hold of- you just have to ask around, saying that you've got a plot to rip off the government. The only problem is, he tends to get a bit involved and will take any opportunity to execute his own sense of justice, even at the sacrifice of the project.



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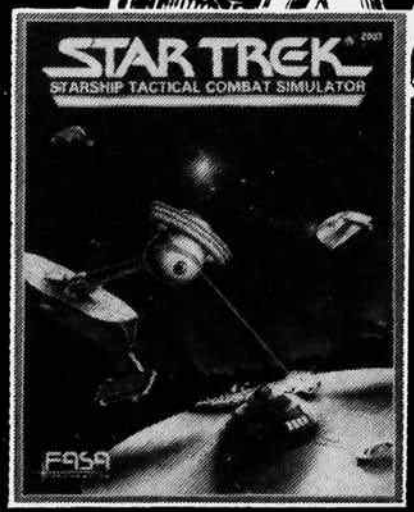

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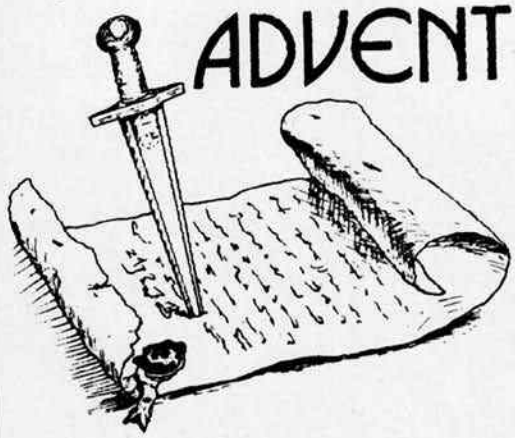

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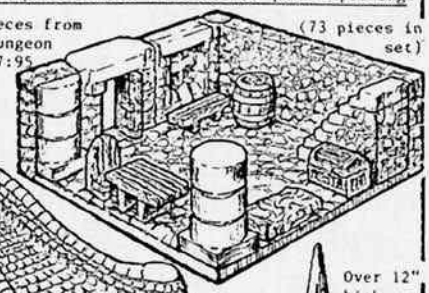

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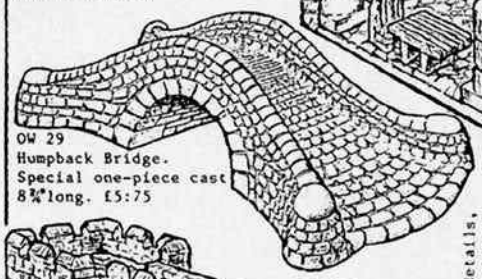

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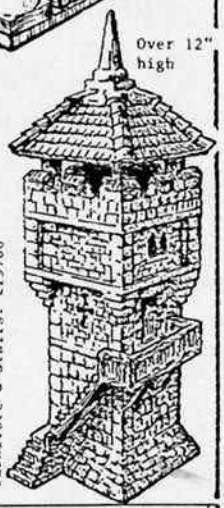

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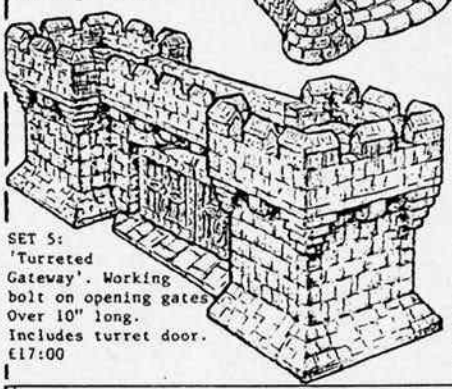

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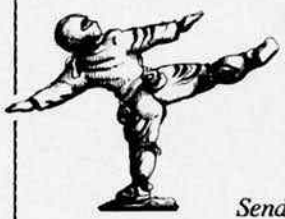

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NOVELS:

1. **BENEATH THE MOORS**, *Arkham House, 1974.*
2. **BURROWERS BENEATH, THE**: *'DAW' Books, 1974.*
3. **TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW**, *DAW Books, 1975.*
4. **SPAWN OF THE WIND**, *Jove/HBJ 1978.*
5. **IN THE MOONS OF BOREA**, *Jove/HBJ 1979.*
6. **HERO OF DREAMS**, *Paul Ganley, Pub. Buffalo, N. York 1986.*
7. **MAD MOON OF DREAMS**, *forthcoming in1987, Paul Ganley, Pub.*
8. **ELYSIA**, *forthcoming, Paul Ganley, Pub. 1987.*
9. **RETURN OF THE DEEP ONES**, *in serial, in 'Fantasybook' No.s 1,2, and 3 of Vol. 3.*

SHORTS:

10. **SISTER CITY**: *in 'Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos', Arkham, 1969.*
11. **SECOND WISH, THE**: *in 'New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos', Arkham, 1971.*
12. **CALLER OF THE BLACK, THE**: *Title story of the book, Arkham 1971.*
13. **LAST RITE, THE**: *in 'Witchcraft & Sorcery' No. 10, 1974.*
14. **AUNT HESTER**, *in 'The Satyr's Head & Others', Corgi,1975.*
15. **WHAT DARK GOD?**, *in 'Nameless Places', Arkham House, 1975.*
16. **MYLAKHRION THE IMMORTAL**, *in 'Fantasy Tales' No. 1, 1977. (and most recently seen in Adventurer #3).*
17. **KISS OF BUGG-SHASH**, *Cthulhu 3', Spectre 1978.*
18. **SORCERER'S DREAM, THE**: *in 'Whispers' 4, 1979.*
19. **CEMENT SURROUNDINGS**, *in 'Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos' Arkham, 1979.*
20. **RECOGNITION**, *in 'Weirdbook 15', 1981, (and more recently in Adventurer #8).*
21. **NAME AND NUMBER**, *in 'Kadath' No. 5, 1982.*
22. **BLACK RECALLED, THE**: *in 'World Fantasy Convention Book' 1983.*
23. **STATEMENT OF ONE JOHN GIBSON**, *in 'Crypt of Cthulhu' 19, 1984.*
24. **HOUSE OF CTHULHU, THE**: *in book of same title, Weirdbook Press, 1984.*
25. **THE COMPLEAT CROW**, *forthcoming in 1987; Paul Ganley, Pub.*
26. **DE MARIGNY'S CLOCK**, *in 'The Caller of the Black', (see 12).*
27. **MIRROR OF NITOCRIS, THE**: *in 'The Caller of the Black', (see 12).*
28. **THING FROM THE BLASTED HEATH, THE**: *in 'The Caller of the Black', (see 12).*
29. **NIGHT SEA-MAID WENT DOWN, THE**: *in 'The Caller of the Black', (see 12).*
30. **RUNNING MAN, THE**: *forthcoming.*

NOVELETTES:

31. **RISING WITH SURTSEY**, *in 'Dark Things', Arkham House, 1971.*
32. **FAIRGROUND HORROR, THE**: *in 'Disciples of Cthulhu', DAW 1971.*
33. **HAGGOPIAN**, *in 'Mag. of Fantasy & Sci-Fi', June 1973. (and most recently seen in Adventurer #5).*
34. **BORN OF THE WINDS**, *in 'Mag. of Fantasy & Sci-Fi', Dec '75.*
35. **HORROR AT OAKDEENE, THE**: *in book of same title, Arkham 1977.*
36. **HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE, THE**: *in 'Kadath' No. 3, 1980.*
37. **LORD OF THE WORMS**, *in 'Weirdbook 17', 1984.*
38. **CURSE OF THE GOLDEN GUARDIANS**, *in the 'House of Cthulhu & Others'. Weirdbook Press, USA, 1984.*
39. **SPAGHETTI**, *in 'Weird book' 21, 1986.*
40. **DAGON'S BELL**, *in 'Weirdbook' 23, forthcoming in 1987.*
41. **DYLATH-LEEN**, *in 'The Caller of the Black'.*
42. **IN THE VAULTS BENEATH**, *in 'The Caller of the Black',(see 12).*
43. **STATEMENT OF DR. HENRY WORTHY**, *in 'Horror at Oakdeene', (see 35).*

POETRY COLLECTION:

44. **GHOUL WARNING & OTHER OMENS**, *Spectre, 1982.*

Mythos Master

AN INSIGHT TO THE WORK OF BRIAN LUMLEY BY STE DILLON

In late 1967, **August Derleth - H.P. Lovecraft**'s friend and correspondent until Lovecraft's death, and afterwards his principal publisher- invited an ardent British fan, **Brian Lumley**, to 'try his hand' at writing stories set against the fabulous backdrop of Lovecraft's **Cthulhu Mythos**. Derleth was specifically searching for stories to use in his forthcoming collection of old and new tales, to be titled: *'TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS'*. Lumley is now the foremost author still writing in that genre, and the following list, (1st. appearances only) barring some articles, poems and 'fringe' Mythos material, is an up-to-date bibliography of his Mythos work. For players of the **Call Of Cthulhu** game, this will provide an indispensible source-list; the stories themselves should remain a constant inspiration.

MYTHOS MASTER

With the exception of **"Ghoul Warning and Other Omens"**, Brian Lumley's poetry has been omitted; however, one poem has to be mentioned, namely: **'City out of Time'**. "City" is so Mythos-redolent that we produce it here, with the author's permission:

1st Published in Fantasy Tales *2, 1977.*

Brian Lumley's principal additions to the Cthulhu Mythos consist of several 'famous names', a number of 'eldritch tomes', and not least, a trio of 'gods' from the dark spaces 'out there'!

In the first category we find **Sir Amery Wendy-Smith**, that ill-fated seismographer whose study of earthquakes brought him to such a shudde-ry end in **'Cement Surroundings'**; he was one of the first to tell the world (or to try to tell us) about **'The Burrowers Beneath!'** Then there's **'Titus Crow'**, one of the world's most foremost occultists, finally forced to flee from this sphere of existence by **'Ithaqua the Wind-Walker'** on the night that Blowne House (Crow's bungalow retreat) literally **was**, blown right out of this world in a 'freak localised storm...'

Crow, too, before he incurred the wrath of Ithaqua, had stumbled on the secret of the **Cthonians**. In order to escape the 'Wind-Walker, he used a device once owned by 'Etienne Laurent de Marigny', the famous New Orleans mystic - 'de Marigny's Clock!' Incidentally, Crow's somewhat younger protege in occult matters is none other than the son of that same mage: Hanri-Laurent de Marigny. Anyone who read the story 'The Mirror of Nitocris' in an early issue of 'Imagine' will know why Henri has a strong dislike for looking-glasses. (And also possibly why Imagine is now defunct!)

Lumley also gave us Ithaqua's arch-enemy **Hank Silberhutte**, in the memorable novels 'Spawn of the Wind' and 'In the Moons of Borea'. Hank is about to make a comeback in **'Elysia'**, soon to be published in USA. This is the big novel which pulls all of the Titus Crow books, the Primal Land books, and Lumley's 'Dreamlands' series to a compelling conclussion - when the stars finally come right and Cthulhu is set free!

Of course, the above mentioned 'names' are only the good guys - but Lumley has given us some bad guys, too - and some of them are beauties. Anyone fortunate (unfortunate?) enough to own copies of the 'Cthåat Aquadingen', a transcribed 'G'harne Fragments' and possibly the '7th Book of D'harsis', will already know something of these pantheon-prowlers. Probably too much! We suggest he burn said books and enter a monastery soonest!

The Bad Guys (old ones) we're talking about are of course (no SAN points for guessing) **Shudde-M'ell**, the 'Prime Burrower' and 'Lord of the Cthonians', **Yibb Tstll** of the 'Vacillating Eyeballs', and **Bugg-Shash** who's a mite too free with his kisses! Shudde-M'ell first saw light of print in Lumley's short story 'Cement Surroundings'; but he kept on burrowing right through the novel 'The Burrowers Beneath'. He leads the subterranean Cthonians, creatures like faceless squids that can tunnel through rock like a warm knife through butter!

Incidentally, on the spelling of "Cthonians":

Lumley's 'Primal Land' stories (House of Cthulhu & Other Tales of the Primal Land) make use of several primal 'gods': **Mam** - the Mother of gods; **Yibb-Tstll** - who controls the unwilling **night-gaunts**; **Cthulhu**, and so on. In these tales, the 'God of Darkness' is **Cthon**, "who sits beyond the edge of the world waiting to snare the sun in his nets each night and pull him down." Cthon is therefore the 'god of subterranean things'. Cthonians take their name from him, not from the classical **'Chthonian'** gods of Greek myth. In fact, the latter probably derives from Cthonian and not the other way about, for the primal land existed aeons before the first Greek or Achean!

We make this distinction especially for RPGamers, so that fom now on they'll know they were right first time, no matter how it's spelled on the cover of certain books...

And so back to books:

The British Museum has a copy of the Cthåat Aquadingen, (Aqua: Latin, 'Water'; and Dingen: German, 'Things') and so does (Did?) Titus Crow. Crow's copy was bound in human skin - which went right on sweating! Who could blame it? The book is mainly a compendium of spells for raising up water beings (Cthulhu, Dagon, Deep Ones, Krakens, Naiads, etc) but its more instructive chapters are so well encoded that only a master linguist and cryptographer could ever transcribe them. Well, let's all thank Azathoth (clap of rolling thunder!) for that!

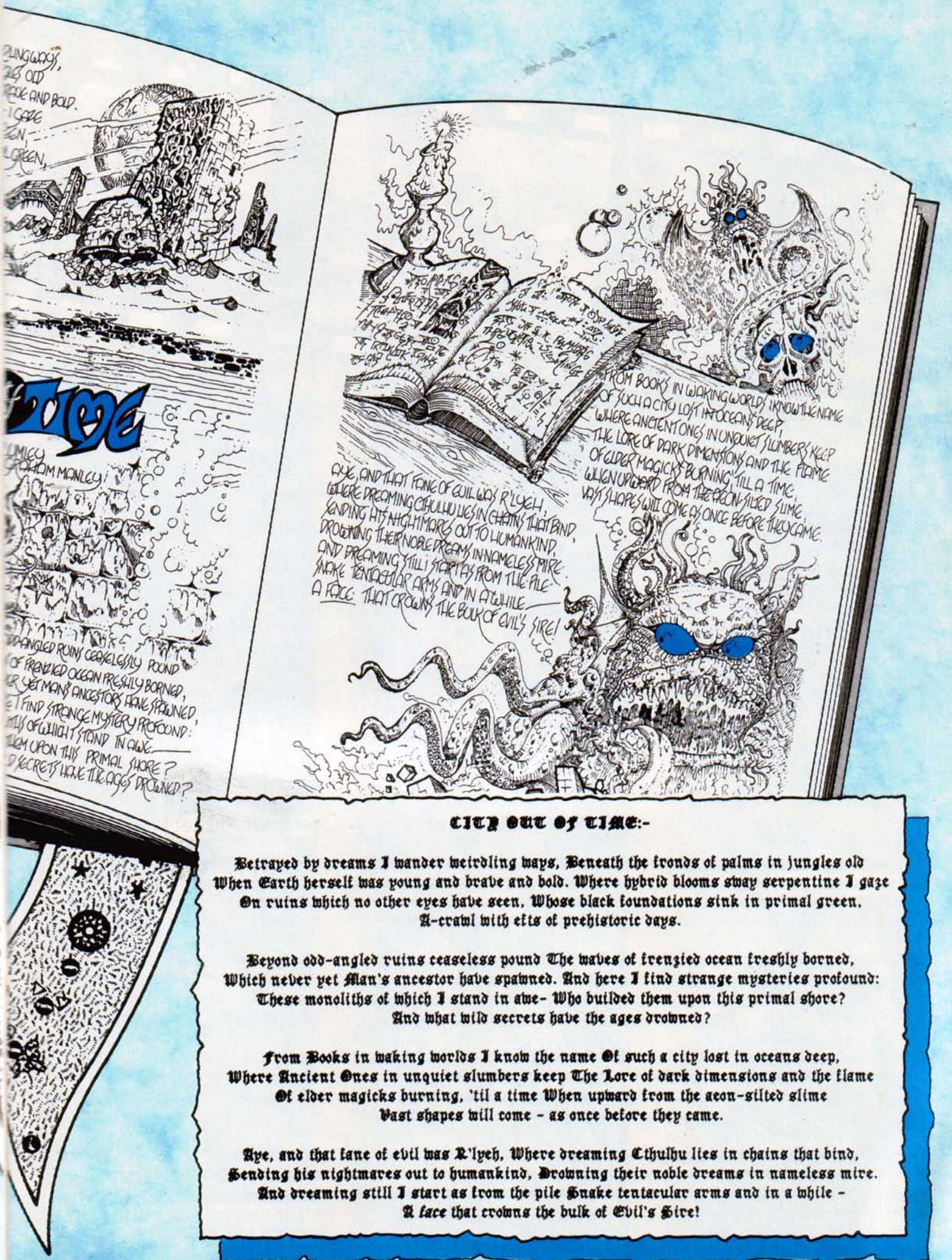
The Cthåat Aquadingen is probably Lumley's best known addition to the Mythos, but it shouldn't be allowed to overshadow the G'harne Fragments. Originally, these were in the form of many fragments or shards of shattered stone, found on the site of dead G'harne in Africa. The first explorers of the region gathered them up and brought them back to England, and Sir Amery Wendy-Smith discovered (and disrupted) several caches of star-shaped stones, many of which they also brought back. Except -

They were the **'star stones of Mnar'**, which kept Shudde-M'ell and the Cthonians prisoned in their deep, dark....

....Ah! But that's a Mythos tale you can read for yourself in an up-coming issue of **Adventurer**! Yes in the not too distant future, we plan to reprint for the first time since 1975, the story which first gave to the world Shudde-M'ell and the Burrowers Beneath. Look out for **Cement Surroundings**, by Brian Lumley, in **Adventurer** soon!

Ed.s note:- Latest books of horror by Brian Lumley, and available in your bookshops or by ordering now, are : **Psychomech, Psychosphere, Psychamok!**, and the massive, monstrous... **"Necroscope"**. And for those who haven't yet bought a copy, there's still a chance to get **Hero of Dreams, Ship of Dreams** and **The Compleat Crow** from the **Adventurer** Club. Don't miss them.

BETROTHED BY DREAMS I WONDER OVER
BENEATH THE FRONDS OF PALMS IN YOU
WHERE HYPERIP BLOOMS, SLOWLY SERPENTINE
ON RUINS WHICH NO OTHER EYES HAVE S
WHOSE BLACK FOUNDATIONS SINK IN PRIME
A SCROLL WITH LEAFS OF PREHISTORIC PACK
Crow
by BRIAN
illustrated by


TIME
FROM BOOKS IN WAKING WORLDS I KNOW THE NAME
OF SUCH A CITY LOST IN OCEANS DEEP,
WHERE ANCIENT ONES IN UNQUIET SLUMBERS KEEP
THE LORE OF DARK DIMENSIONS AND THE FLAME
OF ELDER MAGICKS BURNING, TILL A TIME
WHEN UPWARD FROM THE AEON-SILTED SLIME
VAST SHAPES WILL COME AS ONCE BEFORE THEY CAME.
AYE, AND THAT FANE OF EVIL WAS R'LYEH,
WHERE DREAMING CTHULHU LIES IN CHAINS THAT BIND,
SENDING HIS NIGHTMARES OUT TO HUMANKIND,
DROWNING THEIR NOBLE DREAMS IN NAMELESS MIRE.
AND DREAMING STILL I START AS FROM THE PILE
SNAKE TENTACULAR ARMS AND IN A WHILE—
A FACE THAT CROWNS THE BULK OF EVIL'S SIRE!

CITY OUT OF TIME:-

Betrayed by dreams I wander weirdling ways, Beneath the fronds of palms in jungles old
When Earth herself was young and brave and bold. Where hybrid blooms sway serpentine I gaze
On ruins which no other eyes have seen, Whose black foundations sink in primal green,
A-crawl with efts of prehistoric days.

Beyond odd-angled ruins ceaseless pound The waves of frenzied ocean freshly borned,
Which never yet Man's ancestor have spawned. And here I find strange mysteries profound:
These monoliths of which I stand in awe- Who builded them upon this primal shore?
And what wild secrets have the ages drowned?

From Books in waking worlds I know the name Of such a city lost in oceans deep,
Where Ancient Ones in unquiet slumbers keep The Lore of dark dimensions and the flame
Of elder magicks burning, 'til a time When upward from the aeon-silted slime
Vast shapes will come - as once before they came.

Aye, and that fane of evil was R'lyeh, Where dreaming Cthulhu lies in chains that bind,
Sending his nightmares out to humankind, Drowning their noble dreams in nameless mire.
And dreaming still I start as from the pile Snake tentacular arms and in a while -
A *face* that crowns the bulk of Evil's Sire!

Mein KOPFSCHMERZEN

For those who aren't skilled in the art of foreign language, perhaps the title illustration will give you some idea what this column is about; the problems that crop up during the editor's working day and the production of **Adventurer**, coupled with news and quickie reviews to keep you in touch with the world of fantasy and science fiction. This will replace the **Town Crier** column which **Ian Marsh** has more than adequately provided us with since issue 3. Amicably retiring from this post, no doubt we will see more of Ian's articles and reviews in future issues.

THE DARK NORTH:

I took a trip to Accrington (Nr. Burnley) one Sunday to see what was happening at **The Realm**, the latest of what seems to be a never-ending stream of Live Action Role Playing groups. I was disappointed, after my 1½ hour drive from Liverpool, to find that there was no adventure on that wet, oh-so-early morning.

Apparently, a group from Manchester had let them down. Still, I took the opportunity to look around their indoor labyrinthe, which looked very promising, as the wall sections can be moved around quite easily to avoid players getting used to the layout. Still rather basic facilities, the club is looking for new members over the age of 16. If you live in the area, it's worth a visit, but ring first to check there's something arranged!

FURY ACROSS THE MERSEY?

Nick at **Games of Liverpool** was rather stumped when asked for news of forthcoming items in their (huge) stock list; the only relevant goodie he promised was **Energy Curve** for **Traveller: 2300.**

Of course, his unnerved aspect could have been affected by the bombshell dropped in last month's (April Fool edition) White Dwarf that **Games Workshop** are opening yet another retail outlet- this time hot on Games of Liverpool's doorstep on the banks of the river Mersey. Another Games of Liverpool spokesman said that he was only disappointed that there hasn't been more independant games shops opening in the bigger towns and cities over the past few years, and feels that this has influenced Games Workshop's policy considerably; obviously not unnerved at all.

Whilst across the water, I decided to enquire about the latest news over the **Miniature Paints** war between the Liverpool giants **Games** who have been trading with this fine range of paints since September 1985, and relative newcomers **D.B.I.** under the banner of ex- Games of Liverpool employee Cliff Thornton. Action is currently being fought for 'passing off', and a separate action over the trade mark rights. How does all this affect you and I? Well, it's just causing a lot of confusion in the trade at the moment, which is further complicated by unpleasant untruths which are apparently being spoken over the affair.

10-YEAR OGRE!

Steve Jackson Games are proudly boasting the news of OGRE's 10th. anniversary by holding the "*Ogre Challenge*", which involves the man himself playing simultaneous games of **Ogre** against 10 different opponents at various games conventions. At **OrcCon** in Los Angeles, for instance, only 8 challengers took the dare, and Steve won 5 games, which disappointment he hopes to avoid in future.

The **Ogre Reinforcement pack** will appear shortly, to provide extra maps, counters and scenarios for only $4.95

HONEYMOON HORRORS:

The news that my good self will be hanging up my bachelor

booties and engaging on an adventure of a different kind will hardly shake the role-gaming world. However, to coincide with my honeymoon in July, we're planning a special issue of **Adventurer** to appear. This will be non-topical in as much as there will be no up-to-date news or reviews (for obvious reasons), and one of the special features planned is an exclusive short story by the mythos master himself, **Brian Lumley**. This will be specially written for us, and should make **Adventurer** #13 (the August edition) a collector's item. We will be taking advance orders (for **Adventurer**, of course, not the honeymoon!).

BATTLE OF THE DRAGONS!

There seems to be an ever-approaching dragon-war going on at the moment between the figures manufacturers. **Tabletop Games** are selling "The Dragon" for **£14.95**, which boasts a 250mm wing span. Grenadier's 'Ultimate Dragon' **Terronus** weighs in at 1kg. with a 23 5mm wing span for **£12.95** and **Standard Games'** Dragon outweighs even this with a hefty 1.3kg bulk!

Next issue, we begin a special feature called "weight training for figure-painters!"

Grenadier UK have unleashed yet another dragon recently- their **War Dragon with rider** costs **£4.50**, and *Dragonlords* collectors may well recognise this as the free dragon you received if you collected the set of 12 dragons.

PUBLIC IMAGE:

Convention groupies planning to attend the *Liverpool University War Games* event in July 1987:- unfortunately, this has been cancelled. I don't know whether it was the news that I was going to be there which caused other trade peoples to pull out, but apparently the idea didn't catch on- this lack of enthusiasm seems to be typical of the hobby trade at the moment.

Not one to be put off, though, I will be attending the **Dragon-daze** event being organised by **Armchair Adventures** in Newport, Gwent. This will take place on Saturday 29th. August at St. Mark's Church Hall, Queen's Hill. It's for one day only, from 9-6pm and is very much a local event, although we do hope it may grow into something much bigger. With admission only £1, it should be worth going along to.

FANZINE'S VENOM:

I was particularly hurt to see a bitter attack launched at **Adventurer** in one of the fanzine pages recently:- Apparently, because a particular game review didn't get printed, and another more in-depth one was used in its place, the fanzine editor suggested that **Adventurer's** reviewing policy must be biased! It's incredible that this editor thinks that we shouldn't send out for at least two reviews of a game, or that because a game is reviewed that we **must** print it!!-

All I can respond with is- come off it. Leave it out, mate. Get on with your own job.

3-TAILED BEN!

Ben Goodale, one fanzine editor who knows what he's talking about, was like a dog with three tails thanks to the news passed on by Paul Borreson of **The Laboratory**; the one-paragraph mention of **What's Stirring** in Fanzines Forever #8 got more response than either of The Laboratory's adverts in **Adventurer** or **White Dwarf**! Perhaps some people do appreciate our independant stance and place a lot of trust in our unbiased reviews...

MARATHON D&D

I've news of another world record attempt for D&D playing- this time in Wolverhampton. It's a function to raise money for the P.D.S.A. and there's a minimum time limit set at 48 hours. To find out more, if you want to take part or sponsor this event, ring Mr. **I. Taylor** on (0902) 21200 (2pm to 7pm on Sunday May 31/June 7,14 or 21st only)

NATIONAL GAMING CLUB:

Their first meet is a collaboration with SCARPA and takes place on 24th October 1987 at the Wesley Central Hall, Fratton Rd, Portsmouth Hants. Looks interesting.

FANZINES

PREAMBLE:

Hello, and welcome to the Adventurer fanzine column for this issue (you're right Ben, it *does* always appear in the funny lettering...). Whereas the last few months have seen a decline in 'fandom-fings', it's nice to know that at least *this* month we have some particularly interesting stuff to write about. In fact, so interesting that we're gonna skip first issues and take a look at them next time. First off, we've got something of great interest...

TEAM-UP:

It concerns a team-up between **Pandemonium** and **The Chronicles of Chaos;** no ordinary team-up mind you, but a fully fledged Transatlantic one. Yes, 'tis true! A real fandom first - a team-up between a British and an American zine. The latter, of course, (?) is the American one... Anyway, the zine works well and means that both sets of readers get to see what the other's up to. As one editor put it, "forget the political boundaries, we're all tied together by something we all consider important, RPGS" - or words to that effect!

FANZINE POLL:

Another thing that went down well was the **1986 Rolegaming Fanzine Poll**, which forms the basis of this issue's column (no groaning y'here?)

1st IMAZINE (#16)
2nd UTTER DRIVEL (#6)
3rd DAGON (#16)
4th SOUND & FURY (#5)
5th TELEGRAPH ROAD (#22)
6th TOME OF HORRORS (#6)
7th DIE RUBEZAHL (#3)
8th IVORY TOWER (#7)
9th BALROG BANTER (#7)
10th BONE OF CONTENTION (#7)

For those interested, although there were no ties in the top ten, CEREBRETRON, COD and MORONICA RIPSNORE all tied for 11th...

What we now intend to do is go through each giving you an idea of what they're like. Just a side-track, note that all the zines in the top ten have produced at least five issues (even **Die Rubezahl**- it was the successor to **Monstrous Perversion**, which reached #2 in its day).

So **Imazine** came first huh? It's been around for 16 issues now, since the Autumn of 1983, originally going under such names as '**The Pete Tamlyn Fanclub Newsletter**' and '**Brian Dolton's Book of Flower Pressing**', before settling upon **Imazine** from #6 onwards. It's produced to very high standards, though Paul Mason is apparently trying to make sure it isn't **too** flashy! Discursive articles, good scenario's (for minor systems) and reviews are the mainstay of the zine, all providing a very satisfying read. It's a worthy winner, and since many an editor regards it as a trend-setter, what better trend to set than to win the poll?

Second was **Utter Drivel**, Ben edits this. Moving on...

Seriously though, UD is one of those zines that people tend to love or hate. Some like its subtle blend of chat, discursive gaming material, **Disastria**, humour, and comment, and some don't. It's a sort of general gaming zine, not specialising in any field and thus keeping its options open - what else is there to say? ('Ere Ben, can you undo these #&!"@*Δ¥ chains now?)

Dagon is a fanzine, although many people thought not and refused to vote for it - quite why is obvious, this zine is slick stuff! It's reached #16 also (in less time than IMAZINE) and what an issue it is! It came complete with a handy little warning cover: "This issue contains humorous material that might cause offence to serious minded Lovecraftians!" And it's true. the editor felt that things were getting a little *too* serious lately, and with all those scholars with their heads under piles of notes and fragmentary texts, perhaps a rest is needed? So, all you serious folk out there, why not treat yourselves to articles like '*The Sinister Secret of Shoggoth Street*' and, wait for it... "*I Cthulhu, or What's a Tentacle- Faced Thing Like Me Doing In A Sunken City Like This* (Latitude 47°9'S, Longitude 126°43'W) ?'!!! Need we continue...?

Slotting into fourth place was **Sound & Fury**, now sadly defunct, though an issue #6 will be produced to explain the reasons for the fold, and anything else James can think of. It was always a decent zine, starting off with a bang after an advertising blitz in such places as **White Dwarf**, and **Imazine**. Although many took it upon themselves to use it as a vent for their frustrations, it would always strike back with vengeance. We think it's left a pleasant impression on the hobby however, and James has plenty of copies of #4 and #5 if you haven't tried it.

Fifth came last year's winner (when it was run by the editor), or more accurately, it's new version. We are, of course, talking about **Telegraph Road**, which this time last year was still called DEMON'S DRAWL. As we've said before, it's now dedicated itself to producing the 'Ultimate' RPG, and isn't doing too badly at said purpose. It's not too late to join in, though it will take a bit of time before you pick up the 'feel' of the game. Apart from that, the addition of discussion on Christianity, and some postal games, and the promise of a 'different' music column, all add up to make TOAD (as we not-so-affectionately call it), a well placed fifth.

Sixth place was snatched by **Tome of Horrors**, a madcap rag which excels in fun, humour, and silliness. Presentation has recently undergone a dramatic improvement, and with '*Lord Of The Doorknockers*' finally over (well...) no doubt another will begin - perhaps '*The Sillymarillion*'! The forthcoming issue (#7) just happens to be a team-up with MORONICA RIPSNORE and... um... UTTER DRIVEL - what better chance to sample all three? (Ben, these chains are beginning to *hurt* me...) Anyway, ToH generally provides a light-hearted view of the hobby, but occasionally prints something

BY ALEX BARDY

F O R E V E R ?

serious... occasionally... sometimes... now and then... at long intervals...

Picking up a well-earned seventh is **Die Rubezahl**, #3 of which arrived right on time for reviewing purposes. It's a very well-produced affair, and being A4 size defininitely helps. DR provides a refreshing read, though it has to be said that you have to fairly broad-minded, since it has some weird contents! There were two scenario's in #3 for *Call of Cthulhu* and SFRPGs, as well as instructions on how to write a Fighting Fantasy book and get rich quick, a couple of discursive articles, *Judge Plunkett* (cartoon), and plenty of other stuff. Very good value-for-money, and by far the best DR yet. Great illustrations by Martin McKenna, of **Return To Arkham** fame.

Ivory Tower came in at eighth, and is a predominantly hardware zine (scenarios, etc.), and one that deserves respect at that. IT is living proof (sort of) that a hardware zine *can* do well in Fandom - all the stuff it contains is of a uniformly high standard, and the majority of great interest to players of games other than those covered. It also has its own 'mini-campaign' which is worth following, and the artwork and layout throughout is quite impressive. This comes recommended, especially for Fantasy gamers.

Wot!? **Balrog Banter** came ninth! Well, what can we say? This is a notorious zine, originally noted for its incredibly poor layout, presentation, and writing style. It seems that #7 should be noted for its attack on various hobby persons for their sarcastic comments **about** BB, where there are no less than *four* (4) remarks, about a certain *Ben Goodale* (that should help sales...)!! And Ben's not the only one either! BB offers a lot of rules stuff for games like AD&D, Laserburn, and Judge Dredd, and if you don't like reading lots a stats, you won't like BB, though it *does* contain some 'chatty' bits, including Live Action Roleplaying reviews, lager debates, and voodoo (!?!). It's definitely improved, is well printed, and has some good artists too; quite a few reasons to pick up a place in the top ten we think...

Tenth was **Bone of Contention**, though it probably deserved higher. The zine has improved an awful lot since it got itself two editors, and is now one of the more pleasurable reads in Fandom. It's another zine like ToH - madcap, stupid, silly, and sometimes intelligent. The not-so-nice bits include the political discussions, the 'looseness' of the contents, and their dreadful habit of using a monstrous collection of typefaces which new technology has brought into the homes of many. Apart from that, the zine itself is a nice read, the layout has improved a lot, and their artist knows his stuff (**Joe Stephenson** is his name...). Very much under-rated zine this, perhaps now it'll get the kind of coverage it well deserves, then again perhaps not...

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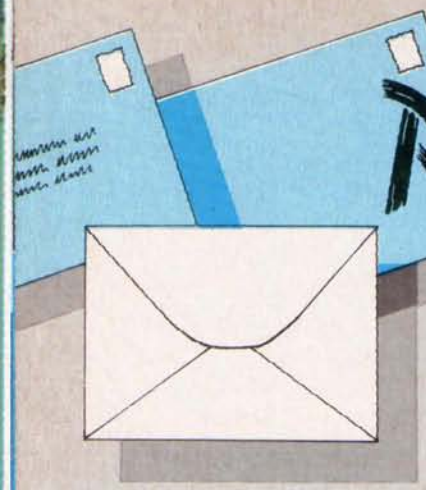

WAYNE'S P.B.M. HINTS AND TIPS.

I've had several requests from readers asking me for advice and instruction with regards to *playing* P.B.M., so here are some of the 'secrets' I have picked up over the years. Although these guidelines apply mostly to the **Sword and Sorcery** type game, they can be modified and translated into any other form of P.B.M.; be it sci-fi, western or whatever.

Single Character Fantasy Games

1) Try to create a character with a set **objective** in mind. Map out mentally what you want him to be like. Decide what class he is going to be, his strengths and weaknesses. Then give him a name. For example, **Malgarry the Wizard**, who will be good at magic, very dextrous but useless in physical combat. His aims are to help rid the world of evil.

2) Now think of your character's **personality** . This should fit in with his aims. To give Malgarry the Wizard a nasty, greedy streak would go against his main objective, so I would stick to goodly virtues. E.g. he is honest, if thrifty, law abiding but has a vigilante streak.

3) **Religion** next. I personally start off by worshipping a god from the word go. This puts you in the gods' favour and gives you a strong ally in the church. You can be either an atheist ot agnostic, but in the P.B.M. worlds, gods usually have a very large sphere of influence. Select one which is relevant to your character's aims. In Malgarry's case, I would pick the god of *magic* or *science.* You should pray to your god at least once a round. By this I mean, **pray** not ask for something. For example Prayers should be like this *"Lord and master, I confirm my eternal faith and belief as you are the one true god"* rather than like this *"Lord, you are the most honest and generous of all gods so I would therefore like a plus 25 vorpol sword with unlimited wishes attached"*. I can tell you for a fact that in any game, the Gods get most peeved about this kind of request. If you get on well with your deity, the world will seem a lot better in your eyes. Also, regular attendance to church, sacrifices, remembering holy days and piety in general will go a long way.

4) The **physical aspects** of a character are also important. I make all my characters look as bland and normal as possible. They are usually 'Mr Average'- average height, weight and build. If you have a 7 foot tall, green haired, one-eyed, tattooed warrior walking about town, he's going to stick out like a sore thumb and be easy to spot by the police/militia/guards. More importantly, he can be picked out by other characters who may be after him and who probably want to kill him!!

Malgarry would be slightly balding, around thirtyish, have a small beer-gut and dress plainly.

In a SF single character P.B.M. you will probably be offered a **mutation**. Make sure that you get one that isn't outstanding, or your character is as good as dead.

Only when you are hard enough, powerful enough and rich enough should you indulge in such luxuries that will single you out. I know one guy who has an evil character that has black plate mail, with insy winsey gold lame trim around the edges!!! I ask you.

5) **Detail**. The more that goes into creating your character the better. It gives the G.M. and yourself a lot more scope for roleplaying. Give your character quirks, habits or attitudes that will make him more interesting. Also keep notes on what equipment, spells, money and artifacts he has. There is nothing more annoying than saying that Malgarry tries to use his 50ft of rope to swing across a cavern only to find out when your round is returned that you used it a couple of rounds back, but you forgot to cross it off your equipment list!

Computer-moderated P.B.M.

You should always read the manner in which the computer processes your orders. If you send in your instructions in the wrong order, your whole turn could be rejected by the computer with disastrous results.

Write out your instructions on a piece of scrap paper first and check them over when you are finished. Once they are deemed O.K. go ahead and fill in your round sheet. Always plan ahead. If you are going to attack someone, do your recruiting, moral raising and weapon storage the round before you actually attack them.

Keep an eye out for 'bugs' in the computer programs. No P.B.M. program is perfect and you can often find a 'bug' that is to your advantage - This isn't cheating, just making your way in the world.

General Points

Try to make at least a couple of player character friends, who will come to your aid if you are in trouble. You can travel around together and it is always safer in numbers.

Try to join an organisation. Even if you don't agree with its aims. It's nice to have friends and membership of an organisation will do the trick.

Don't annoy characters who have played the game for a lot longer than you. You could meet up with them and you can wave goodbye to your character.

Inject a little of yourself into the character and don't expect him to attempt to do things you wouldn't do. i.e. If you see a bar room brawl between 50 drunken beer bottle waving maniacs, don't dive in and don't try to stop it!!

When you write your character's instructions, always number the points 1), 2) etc. in chronological order, as this saves time. Also write neatly, printing is ideal. If a plan which you submit is complex, include a basic resumé of it for the G.M. .

Always have an escape option prepared if something goes wrong. A backup plan is a must.

Re-read you old round sheets on a regular basis as you may find out things that didn't click the first time you saw them.

Finally, whan watching T.V. or video keep a pen and paper handy. You never know when an idea may crop up on the box, which could be translated into a good idea for your character.

The London P.B.M. Pub meet

Just a reminder that the London P.B.M. pub meet takes place on the first friday in each month upstairs at **The Crown Pub**, Brewer St, Picadilly, London W1. If you're over the age of 18 you are more than welcome. You'll pick up a lot of tips, hints and rumours in the process of having an enjoyable night out. At the last count 125 players of both sexes turned up. This is your chance to talk to the G.M.s whilst they are under the influence of large quantities of alchohol and extract all kinds of useful information!!

Well that's it for this month. Next month it will be back to actual P.B.M. game reviews and more bargain offers. Finally, it always pays to buy your G.M. a drink, as bribes, especially alchohol based bribes, work wonders. if your G.M. is a computer-tough!!!

See ya in thirty (or so)

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ONCE DENNY TOLD HER SHE'D SPOKEN TO A DEMON IN A DINNER JACKET. EXCITING? YES. BUT THEY ALL LOOKED LIKE PEOPLE.
THESE DON'T.
WHIPLASH
The Gathering
WRITTEN BY PAUL HAYES.
ILLUSTRATED BY STEWART (STAZ) JOHNSON.
THE ARTWORK FOR THIS EPISODE OF 'WHIPLASH' IS DEDICATED TO JOANNE CALTON — A LOVE LOST, BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN.
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SHE CAN FEEL IT'S GRIP. HARD, COLD. FLAKES OF PUTRESCENT SKIN, DEAD GREY SKIN, HAVE FALLEN ON HER SHOULDER.
THIS THING WANTS TO KILL HER. SHE WANTS TO RETCH.
IT'S FINGERS ARE TIGHTENING ON HER WINDPIPE. SHE CAN SMELL IT'S STENCH. THE SMELL OF DEATH. FAMILIAR....
...WHEN SHE WAS A GIRL. WHEN NANNY USED TO TAKE HER ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS TO HOLD HER GRANDFATHERS HAND FOR AN HOUR. TO WATCH HIM ROT, RIDDLED WITH CANCER. MY GOD! SHE'S BEING STRANGLED AND SHE'S THINKING ABOUT HER CHILDHOOD!!
NO!

I AM BEGINNING TO HAVE THIS AWFUL FEELING, HARRY, THAT MAYBE WE ARE NOT GOING TO MAKE IT TO THE VILLAGE...
HARRY OLD CHAP, HOW MANY DAYS IS IT TO THE BANK HOLIDAY?
AT A TIME LIKE THIS - GOD KNOWS! WHY?
BECAUSE I THINK THESE PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN THEIRS EARLY...

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ER, I MEAN I'LL GET ON IT RIGHT AWAY.
SNICK
AGRICULTURAL SUPPLIERS
THIS BODY HAS OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS, AND THAT PORTLY FIGURE HAS SKILLS I COULD MAKE GOOD USE OF.
DESIST! I KNOW THIS LADY!
WHEK! WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE!
MAMA M'BHOTÉ! GOODT'SEE YA
YOU KNOW THE AGROPHILES STILL BURN EFFIGIES OF YOU?
DO THEY REALLY? GOSH WHAT A TEAM WE WERE
THE BEST! SEEN ANYTHING OF NIK THE GODEATER?
NO, BUT I HEARD HE WAS RUNNING A LITTLE EMPIRE ON CEBIT SIXTY THREE.
WELL. THANKS A LOT, WHEK. FOR LETTING US HELP YOU MOVE MONSTERS AND NEARLY GETTING KILLED, AND GETTING ARRESTED AND NEARLY GETTING KILLED AND FIGHTING MONSTERS AND NEARLY...
OH HELLO! WE ARE ALL GOING BACK TO MAMA'S PLACE, AND WE WILL ALL GET STRAIGHTENED OUT, OK.?
WHAWASSAT?
Turnip Seed
ZOUNDS! I MISSED!.. CAN'T TRANSMIGRATE AGAIN UNTIL I REGAIN MY STRENGTH
OO-ARR... AN' OI'LL 'AVE A BAG O'TURNIP SEED.
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NEXT ISSUE:

In next month's action-packed issue, Wendy Graham interviews **Terry Pratchett,** author of **The Colour of Magic** books, while in **Scatophagium** there's a look at the legal system of our very own campaign world- well worth it if you are one of those GMs who likes to keep your players on their toes. If you like the new-look **Whiplash** in this issue, it really hots up next month. There's also an article on designing scenarios, and a cameo **Science Fiction** scenario to panic about!

Now for the bad news; due to recent increases in paper supply and a work to rule by **Adventurer's** workforce of elves and dwarves, we've been forced to increase the cost of the magazine from next issue. It will now cost **£1.20** per issue, and subscriptions will increase to **£6.95** for six issues. Subscribing will ensure a regular delivery, and even save you money. If you do have trouble obtaining copies of Adventurer, just ask your newsagent or shopkeeper to reserve a copy each month.

MAGAZINES AND BOOKS!

If you've ordered a copy of Brian Lumley's **"Mad Moon Of Dreams"**, it won't be available until late Summer, but it is worth ordering in advance to make sure you get a copy.

One book which is available, though, is Darrell Schweitzer's **"Tom O'Bedlam's night out and other Strange Excursions"**. This is highly recommended if you like zany fantasy with a humourous fairy-tale air!!

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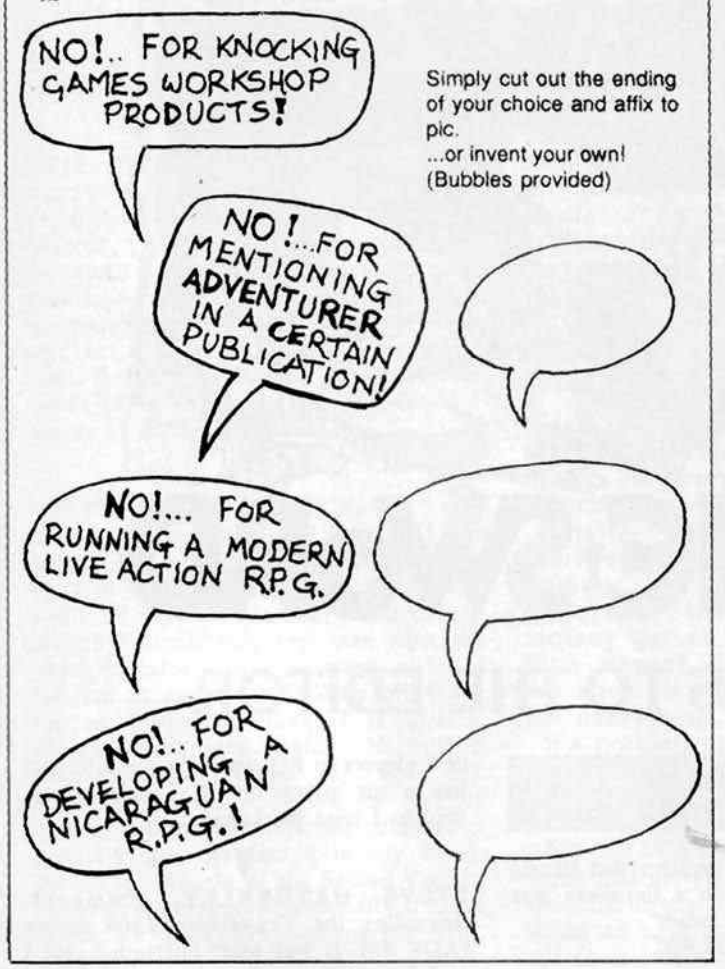
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LIVE BY THE SWORD

READERS' LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please address all letters to: LIVE BY THE SWORD, ADVENTURER, 85 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6DG.

J.B. NOBLE, Maidstone: Heretic! 'UZ' not know about Griselda, Wolfhead, Kroked, Flychar, Simbal (Pikat Yaraboom... etc...)?!!! Humph!!! How dare you, you chaos-spawned disease-ridden broo-loving goat-headed lesser-spotted reptile... mnngnhh!!!! If you continue takin' that attitude little 'uman, **Crunch** is gonna have to teach you some respect (wiv 'is little **maul**, hur hur!! **Crunch** likes Griselda and her gang, Crunch not like lunars or dumb-editor-chaos-creatures...!!).

If you think your readers don't know what **Oliver Dickinson** is talking about (LBTS #8) then it certainly is time for your readers' poll.

Please thank **Mr. Dickinson** for some excellent writing in the past, and I for one am very interested in the continuing story of **Griselda** etc., as I am sure are many other of us old-timers- it gives us something to read in our bath-chairs you know!

☞ Bring back Griselda!! ⚔

What a way to start a lettercol! I guess some of you do still take your role-playing seriously, huh?

▼

D. MICHAELS, Wirral: Quote:

"I should have known the gremlins would strike again, laying all my plans to waste."

Adventurer #5, Editorial.

O.K. what happened to my room numbers? (**Adventurer** #8 - 'Cocoon'). Only joking, Ste! **Adventurer** is not alone when it comes to Gremlins; a curse often inflicted on editors, as you will see by the following quote:

Friday, September 30, 1938

"The Daily Express declares that Britain will not be involved in a European war this year, or next year either"

Daily Express Issue #11,970.

▼

MARK CLAYTON, London: What is this outrage? What has happened to the 'ye olde shoppe' that used to adorn the top of the 'Shop Window' page? It now looks like a baby's first impression of a shop using building blocks™. Do something about it, or I might crawl over to your office and hit you over the head with my rattle...

You wouldn't *believe* how much time and effort goes into the design process of your magazine- all that hard work and creative input, only to be threatened by an infantile attack with a rattle?

Seriously, Adventurer has had a visual overhaul since the early issues, and it might be interesting to find out what more of our readers think about the 'new look'.

▼

TOM ZUNDER, Sheffield: A very competant review of **RuneQuest III** (**Shop Window** #8), and a good summary of the first really accessible edition of that game. I think you're right that the **Avalon-Hill** edition was disastrous, not in content but in price and presentation. **Oliver Dickinson** is right (LBTS #8) that Glorantha can still be played with RQIII, and in my opinion is better than before, but that what RQIII always needed was more general applicability- and now it has got it. **Griffin Island** is proving excellent with new players to RQ, and as a scenario pack has a lot going for it. I must admit, though- I miss the Lunars...

▼

STEVE HATHERLEY, Sidmouth: Regarding the **Traveller: 2300** review (ADV #8), it was most interesting, but I feel I ought to point out that there are considerably more than 3 mistakes contained- the game was clearly rushed out to meet the U.S. christmas market and has suffered in editing. Fortunately, though, they're all mistakes that any reasonably smart GM can work out. One large flaw becomes obvious- combat is very safe. To remedy this (for all those Refs. like myself who like lethal combat), the simple alterations are:- 1) Cut by half the conciousness and Life Levels and 2) Double all weapon Damage Point values. This makes combat 4 times more lethal. Much better.

▼

PETER and JANET VIALLS, Huntingdon: **Heresy** was very good indeed (ADV #8): however, we disagree with **Philip St. Leger's** conclusions. We don't like running a campaign with a Christian background because, firstly, it means that mages are automatically in opposition to priests. Secondly, medieval Christianity was just too damned unpleasant. (Consider its attitude to women and its general intolerance, rigidity and narrow-mindedness. Remember, also, that medieval Christianity regarded ALL non-humans as demons and devils. If Christianity is real, these perceptions must be correct). Characters should not have to face a world where there are NO good gods (unless they are in Call of Cthulhu). Thirdly, there is too much chance of offending practising Christians (or Muslems or Hindus).

However, the various benefits that Philip St. Leger mentions can be used just as

effectively with an **invented** polytheistic system, if a little care and imagination is applied when designing the gods. Obviously, this is a matter of personal preference, but we find Christianity as a gaming religion just too restricting.

▼

NEIL GRANT, Mid-Glam: It is worth noting that the division between polytheism and monotheism is often very blurred; the Greek pantheon was technically polytheist, but many Greek philosophers were monotheist, explaining the multiple popular gods as aspects of the one, and this was not considered a heresy. Also, the Knights Templar were supressed for POLITICAL reasons, under cover of a charge of heresy.

▼

STEVE HATHERLEY: "Heresy" was most interesting, but then I found as I was reading it I was applying the principles to cults in **Call of Cthulhu**. From that point of view it was very interesting- though I'm not sure that was what the author intended. I have two minds as far as religion in games goes. With my CoC cap on, I like the *'mankind is utterly insignificant'* idea. **Simon Nicholson** summed it up (LBTS #8). With my **Traveller** hat on, I like the idea of playing with oddball futuristic religions. I certainly don't go into it in any detail, though the thought of the Second Coming being an alien appeals (especially if those aliens are currently awaiting the 47th. coming...).

▼

JASON BISHOP, Kenilworth: Please don't brush off Superhero games simply because of their childish image. It annoys me to see the attitude that people take to comic-books, due simply to the Superman films and the Batman TV series. I agree that these are juvenile and idiotic, but don't let them be the only side of comics that you see. Would your AD&D players like to have their system ignored because of the D&D cartoon series, or trashy sword & sorcery films?

Personally, I prefer to play the stereotyped avenging warrior of many fantasy novels, but this is difficult when every time you advance a level there is a monster in the next adventure which can wipe the floor with you.

The answer? I enjoy reading comic books and have done so for many years. I recently bought a copy of GH and tried to play it, but one of the players wanted bombs built into his costume and another hung back for fear of getting killed. I suspect that this paranoia is due to games such as AD&D, which promote such fears and reactions. Eventually, I convinced the players of their power, and handed around a few of my comics to give them a taste of how they ought to act. Soon they gained in confidence, and began to enjoy the freedom of being able to do the things they always dreamed of doing, such as punching thugs through walls, seeing bullets bounce off their chests, and so on.

Maybe if people read some comics before making judgements on these games, I would see a few more superhero scenarios in my magazines.

Firstly, Jason, I'm proud to confess to being a one-time MARVEL-ite myself, as well as being an ex-member of F.O.O.M. so I know what comics are all about, ok? Secondly, all RPGs will suffer from a poor referee, or a discrepancy between players' expectations and the GM's perception of a good campaign. If you want to play a mega-powerful hero then that's fine. Personally, I prefer subtle interactive scenarios using characters with social or physical handicaps, as I feel these give the most opportunities for good roleplaying. I don't insist, however, that all players should do the same.

Finally, the reasons why we apparently 'ignore' superhero games is that a) They are generally less popular than fantasy games b) We've had very little decent SH material and c) We have so much to do and can't do everything.

It's nothing to do with biases on the grounds of their public image.

▼

ANN MACEY, Newport: I have to admit that the greatest impression I have from the letters pages is that all the fun seems to have gone out of roleplaying. All these letters writers being so serious about a game. I play games to relax after a hard days work. I am Treasurer of our local Club **The Celtic Crusaders** (yes, I know- who would make a Hobbit their Treasurer?!) and what I want from a RPG is a few hours' enjoyment. The charts and tables in issue 8 letters page just left me cold. When I play, if the GM says something happens then it does. I mean, they know, they've got the book. I just react. When I run a game, then I expect my players to do the same. For example:-

"You are walking quietly through the caverns when there is a sudden simultaneous flash and a bang! You all have a ringing noise in your ears and everything is black. What do you do...?"

The players don't know at this point if it was a fireball, lightning bolt, gas explosion, or cannon fire, and I ain't saying. Which means that they won't know. This gets them worried; it could have been a trap, an ambush or sheer bad luck, and it makes great fun. Playing the same game with no application of imagination would be like this:-

"You walk through the caves. There is a flash and a bang as your torch ignites the methane gas. Take 1 wound and you're blind and deaf for 6 turns."

The players immediately stay still until their eyes and ears return to normal. The other way, they try to keep quiet, to listen, to hide and not to panic- much more fun.

Without getting *too* serious, I think Ann was referring to R.G. Lowe's tables on damage from falling (LBTS #8), which was met with some response, not least of which were the following:-

▼

DAVID HALLIWELL, Co. Down: This modification table is unsuitable on three counts:-

1. **Science**: He assumes that damage from falling is proportional to speed of impact, but either a muscle is strained or it is not, a bone breaks or not, and these effects are not related to speed in such a simple way **(not even using F=MxA? -ed.)**

2. **Game Balance:** A tenth level fighter faced with a choice between a formidable opponent and an apparently bottomless chasm would choose the chasm any time, with such a low limit to damage. This doesn't normally fit in with fantasy literature.

3. **Concept:** AD&D hit points are very strange things anyway, and most of the rule books point out that they aren't just related to physical resilience, but to luck, protections and skill. It's probably safe to assume that the Lancaster tail gunner had a lot of hit points due to luck that day!

Probably a better system would be a % system based on the normal total HP, with positive modifiers for distance fallen, and negative modifiers for class and level.

▼

PHIL MASTERS, Stevenage: It is only fair to point out that this lucky individual fell through the branches of a tree before landing in a snow drift-- good for some reduced d6 in any system I think.

Which goes to prove that there are 3 elements to be considered in balanced role-playing rules: the characters, the mechanics and the environment! What if the tail-gunner had been falling through a vacuum or an alien anti-grav. environment? He would suffer no damage at all then. Mr. Lowe, the offender who started all this with his letter, has sent another, clarifying and amending the tables we printed, along with the following:

▼

R.G. LOWE, Aberdeen: Many readers may complain that the damage is too slight using my system, and that characters with 36 hit points or more can survive a fall from any height. This is also true, however, of the old system where characters with 121 HPs can survive any fall.

Leaving one debate to burn itself out and moving swiftly on to Women in Roleplaying, I came across this letter from the irrepressible Miss Little:-

▼

LINDA LITTLE, Redhill: Paradoxically, it is not the blatant chauvinist who causes female gamers most problems; such people can usually be silenced by a few well-chosen words. Besides, the guys who

are involved in role-playing tend to be less chauvinist than most.

Far more difficult to deal with are the genuine 'nice guys' like **Douglas Thomson** (LBTS #8). These are the sort of people who deluge you with articles on *'the female in role-play'*, blush crimson because the latest games book has a sexist cover and glare pointedly at any male who mutters something stronger than "bother" whilst you're present. The sad thing is that they really want to make you feel welcome, but end up making you so self-conscious that you begin to wish you'd spent the evening at the local pub, elbowing your way past the chauvinists to the bar.

Hmmm... not quite the sort of letter I'd expect from a female. Oh, is that a sexist statement? I can't decide. I think, *Linda*, that Janet Vialls' articles on Females in the hobby is potentially far more valuable to our male readers; in fact, it's probably of most value to chauvinists... But then, I wonder if many chauvinists have read it?

▼

PHIL MASTERS: Janet Vialls' piece (WIR #8) was as interesting as ever. Two male SF writers who have used relevant ideas, if only in passing, are **John Varley**, with the community of 'witches' described in **Wizard** and **Demon**, and **Cordwainer Smith**, with the brief but horrific description of the all-male Arachosians in **The Crime and the Glory of Commander Suzdal**-- in my opinion, the finest SF short story ever written.

▼

MARK SAMUELS, Sydenham: Janet Vialls' articles are superb. I always love something that shocks you because it's there all the time but you don't notice it till it punches you between the eyes. With a ratio of 80:1 in RPGs in favour of males, the male perpetually thinks in terms of himself. To have a female sitting across the table instead of a half-drunk male GM would blow the players' minds for sure. Not a bad idea. Forget the classic *'and the 10 black death-frenzied ninjas you just killed have jumped up as black death-frenzied ninja liches!'*, or the equally delicious *'oh, dear, was a magically dark room filled with blink dogs bearing poison fangs overdone then?'* Imagine the scene of nightmare terror as a female brings monstrous **REASON** into the game. Aaargh!

▼

LAURENCE G. TILLEY, Coventry: What venom! **Janet Vialls** has a terribly unsympathetic view of the adolescent male sexuality- I have a frightening vision of an **Edwina Currie**-type vampiress pursuing horny schoolboys into dark alleys, armed with a huge pair of shears! How irate are the terms in which she speaks of the figure's nipples showing through the leather armour- obviously only males have x-ray vision!

STUART LORIMER, Kincardineshire: I thought the articles seemed well thought-out and considered, but I agree with **Geoff Turner** (LBTS #9), that Janet didn't go far enough in emphasising the sheer 'other-worldness' of non-humans, especially elves, which are poorly represented and portrayed in RPGs generally (Dragon Warriors being an exception). I think Janet covered the subject well, but this type of article can be extended to cover other aspects of fantasy worlds which need serious discussion. The AD&D world, in particular, is ill-considered, as it is TSR's policy to use anything and everything in their game, whether it fits in coherently or not. Giant insects, for example, are frequent in the various Monster Manuals, but couldn't exist naturally. Consider that the average insect or arachnid has to consume many times its own weight just to stay alive. Giant insects would have to eat whole herds of cows, etc. just to get sustenance. Also, given the rate at which insects breed, and without the usual natural predators, giant insects would literally be crawling everywhere. Perhaps they can only exist in high fields of magical energy, or they are freak 'mutants', but there must be some limit!

How did we go from Janet Vialls to giant insects, Stuart? Still, since we have, I can only argue on TSR's behalf by saying that AD&D is not marketed as a coherent wholistic campaign game, just as rules for fantasy gaming, whatever your preference. Hence, if you like giant insects in your campaign (and I certainly believe they are at least as plausible as vampires and zombies, etc.) then use them. If you don't like the idea, leave them out. Of course, if like Gulliver, you visited a place where *everything* is bigger, then the average insect would appear to be a *lot* larger than your average garden caterpillar...

▼

STEVE BLEASE, Clevedon: For someone bombasting the ignorances and prejudices of male role-players, Janet Vialls displays a remarkable amount of ignorance and prejudice herself, not to mention a complete lack of tact. In ADV #9, she slams wargaming as 'juvenile'. Obviously she feels that 'playing with toy soldiers' is childish. No more so than pretending to be an elf. Wargaming requires a fair amount of intelligence, and necessitates an extreme depth of research and knowledge. We do not fire matchsticks out of toy cannons, you know!

Wargaming and roleplaying are not separate entities, but merely extended variations on a theme. In certain situations, wargamers need to role-play Generals and their aides, whereas RPGers may end up in the middle of a war. The boundary here is as artificial as that between SF and fantasy and should be broken.

The letters delivered to Live By The Sword are getting rather *political* of late, dealing with such familiar topics as women in gaming, religion, and more controversial epistles such as:-

▼

DAVID HALLIWELL: I urge you not to change your magazine to suit those people who stop off at role-playing games for a few years on their way between BMXs and pubs. This short-sighted pondering to fashion is the route taken by other magazines, and when the craze ends, they will find they have been abandoned by the genuine gamers that they themselves abandoned last year. The trouble with the 'fast buck' is that it leaves as quickly as it arrives, as the manufacturers of skate-boards, frisbees and choppers have discovered in the past. I hope you don't follow this road.

▼

J.B. NOBLE: Concerning the much maligned TWILIGHT 2000- Please do something to assist in the popularity of this excellent games system by covering it in the pages of your magazine. It seems that many people out here in the 'Real World' seem to have taken the bigoted and biased reviews of the game to heart. A few short articles on the state of civilisation in Europe and the rest of the world as it stands in **Twilight 2000** will, I hope, go to show that the game is very logically constructed with no real winners in any part of the world. It may also go towards dispelling the belief that you can only role-play Good old American boys fighting for freedom, the American way and Mom's Apple pie; but that you can play any nationality. Some of my players are **Gru** and **Spetsnaz** (Russian military intelligence and special forces respectively) who spend their time dodging **NATO** forces. In fact, you're not even limited to Europe for the area of operations.

The game contains rules for many different combat modes, so there's something in it for anyone wanting a **modern** combat RPG system, no matter what the historical and political background. It seems such a shame to see so excellent a system suffer in this way at the hands of biased reviewers and editors (Yourself and **Mike Willis** quite definitely excluded), who should know better, as their opinions are often taken as **final** by many readers wanting to know about a new product.

We who were in at the start (well, very nearly) look to magazines such as yours to do true justice to the games industry, and to those who play them, so that a similar situation never arises in this country as has arisen in the U.S. regarding action groups like the **Moral Majority** and their 'book-burning' leaflets.

Finally, to **Joseph Vale** (LBTS #8)- Vell you see, Mein Herr, zuch a RPG does exist, it is called **Behind Enemy Lines**, and it is **not** tasteless.

That's enough politics for this issue. Keep in touch. Ste Dillon.

THE LAKE OF MIST

A CALL OF CTHULHU SCENARIO FOR KEEPERS WHO WANT TO GET THEIR OWN BACK...!

BY STEVE HATHERLEY

KEEPER'S BACKGROUND

This is a parasitic adventure; it requires a host to function properly. While the players are investigating some other Cthulhu Mythos sighting, slowly introduce the handouts enclosed. Bit by bit the players will (mistakenly) realise that something is afoot and go in person to investigate The Lake of Mist.

The Keeper should not force this situation on the players. Let them make up their own minds to investigate the Lake. There is nothing but madness at the end of the scenario so the players should feel that they chose to investigate. That way they can only blame themselves.

The setting is Bodmin Moor, a particularly bleak and windswept part of Cornwall. Bodmin Moor is, like so much of Britain, rich in folklore and legend.

PLAYER HANDOUTS:

Bodmin Moor

The most famous of all the Bodmin Moor legends is that surrounding **Dozmary Pool**. Like Tintagel on the northern coastline, Dozmary Pool (near the almost mythical Jamaica Inn) has a strong Arthurian connection. It is widely believed that King Arthur's famous sword 'Excalibur' was committed to these silent, brooding waters. Indeed, the sword has been known to reappear from time to time. The pool is also known to be haunted by the ghost of John Tregeagle who, on stormy nights, is pursued across the moor by a pack of howling demons.

There is a second lake on Bodmin Moor, one that is barely known. I have been able to find very little on this lake, except that a demon is said to be buried beneath it. The lake lies in a shunned part of the moor and it is widely believed that to enter its swirling mists brings madness.

The Moor has its ownshare of stone circles, too. **The Hurlers**, a group of three stone circles on the eastern side, are the most famous. They are said to be men turned to stone for playing the cornish game of *Hurling* on a Sunday. There are about thirty or forty stones, but no one knows for sure. Less famous are the **Trippet Stones** which lie beyond **St Breward**. Local superstition has it that by walking round the circle nine times brings good luck.

On top of these, each village on Bodmin Moor has its own favourite ghost or demon to haunt it. The south western peoples are a superstitious group - more so than any other even in this enlightened age and their heritage dates back thousands of years. Bodmin Moor has a timeless quality about it that enables the casual visitor to catch just a glimpse of the past, and understand the centuries of myth and superstition which govern this strange land"

*"The ghost which haunts an unnamed lake near the tiny village of **Garrow** on Bodmin Moor is a particularly unpleasant one. The lake, known to the locals as **Devil's Pool** can only be reached by walking a long and tortuous path from St. Breward first to Garrow and then to the lake beyond. The lake is only around 200 yards long and is perpetually covered in fine swirling mists.*

It was during the sixteenth century that a local girl was tried and found guilty of witchcraft. She lived by the lake and supposedly conversed with the "Great Daemon trapped beneath." She lies in an unmarked grave in a lonely part of the churchyard.

Not long after her burial, a series of bizzare deaths shook the tiny village. All those who persecuted the girl died a horrible death, their bodies covered in "hideous sucking wounds that never healed."

The lake is now shunned and the locals believe that walking the lakeside at night brings the devil's curse."

TAKEN FROM: CORNWALL GHOSTS, BY ALEXANDER BARDY. PUBLISHED 1897.

TAKEN FROM: MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN CORNWALL, BY G. HALL. PUBLISHED 1921.

KEEPERS' NOTE:-
This is the only mention of a young girl or a witch. There are three unmarked graves in the churchyard, but the villagers know nothing of this legend. The graves entomb unknown persons found on the Moor. The name "Devil's Pool" is common in English folklore.

KEEPERS' NOTE:-
Most of the above is verified in other books of Cornish legend. It should be discounted from the players' investigations as superstition and worthless. The second lake is not mentioned anywhere else except in the next cutting. It is this lake which seems to have vague Cthulhu Mythos connections and to which the players should be drawn.

"Another source of madness and insight is Devil's Pool at Garrow in Great Britian's Westcountry. There is a great source of knowledge hidden beneath this unpleasant Lake, ever mist- shrouded from the breath of its trapped inhabitants. The lake is a mirror, of that I am certain, a mirror to see the Gods with. Devil's Pool is watched over by the Guardians, men and half-men and not-men of ancient and terrible power living in the tiny, shadowed Garrow. Do not cross the Guardians."

THIS QUOTE IS BELIEVED TO COME FROM ONE OF THE FORBIDDEN BOOKS, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH.

"We are saddened to learn of the sudden death of fellow journalist Terrance Greer who was struck dead last weekend while holidaying in his native Cornwall. Mr Greer was a well respected occultist and member of the Golden Dawn society. He wrote the occasional article in occult journals and had a regular column in this paper.

He was found in his room at Jamaica Inn by friends. He had been researching for a book on haunted lakes and had just visited Garrow.

We shall be reprinting a series of his best articles from the past issues of The Scoop."

THE SCOOP, MAY 1923

KEEPERS' NOTE:-

There is more to this story than meets the eye. By researching further, the players can find out that Mr Greer was wearing his walking clothes, that he was muddy and had evidently just come from the moors when he died. Worse, upon his face was such a look of terror that it was diagnosed (correctly) that he simply died of fright. Although (it was supposed) that it would take a very great shock to frighten one such as the great occulist.

Terrance Greer was not an important member of the Golden Dawn. Neither was he the great occulist that The Scoop would have you believe. The Scoop itself is a London tabloid, dedicated to printing lurid stories and blowing them all out of proportion.

Mr. Greer did, however, have a diary on his person when they found him. It is now kept by his only surviving relative, his brother Ronald Greer:-

DATE: 14th.

"Garrow is a truly lonely place. Set in a desolate part of the Moor, it seems to attract only old folk. I haven't seen anyone below 60 years of age here. They are all private people, willing to talk about the world, but strangely reserved when talking about themselves. The only sense that I got out of them about the lake, is that I shouldn't go there at night.

I have booked a room at the Inn. It was a long and tiring walk from my car in Middle Candra to this ghastly place. Despite the locals' almost desperate warnings, I shall brave the twilight and see the lake at its best. This could be some really useful information for my book.

My first impressions of the lake; It is a short walk from Garrow to the lake (I managed to glean from the innkeeper that they call it Devil's Pool) through the gentle mist. In this twilight world, the lake has an almost magical quality about it. Swathed in swirling mists, the surface of the pool - what I can see of it - is as smooth as glass. This is a truly unhallowed ground; diseased, twisted, slime-draped trees; mysterious tracks on the ground; a sense of timelessness; and the swirling mists. I thought I just saw someone beckoning. I must investigate further, the locals never said anything about anyone living up here.

I found nobody, but a series of footprints leading to the water's edge.

He must have been wearing strange footwear because of the strange, almost clawed, imprint that he made. I have called out, but my voice is swallowed in the mists.

The air is so invigorating here. I feel wonderful.

I can hear voices. Low and guttural, they chant something. The mists part briefly to reveal figures, the villagers, holding aloft burning brands. They begin to circle the lake. Eerie.

I can hear something. A faint rippling or gurgling, I'm not sure which. The figures pass in the mist, their torches throwing shadows all around me. There is a truly loathsome stench wafting from the lake. I can see something vast in the mist.

They are not human! The guardians - they are not human! One of the strange hooded watchers came close and I saw! I ran, but I can hear the sounds of pursuit.

The thing in the mist! It is all true, all of it!

The Guardians!"

THIS IS THE LAST ENTRY IN TERRANCE GREER'S DIARY.

KEEPERS' NOTE:-

Mr. Greer's car was found in Middle Gandra next morning, so it can only be assumed that he walked over the moors to his room at Jamaica Inn. This is a trek of maybe a mile and a half, over some very treacherous ground. How he managed to navigate the marshes unaided at night, and in the state that his diary indicates, we shall never know.

WALKER FOUND

*The man was standing in the yard when he was found. **Richard J. Hellicar** was found by the farmer, R. Jansen of Roughland Farm early Tuesday morning. Mr. Hellicar appeared to be suffering from shock, or had experienced a great fright. He had evidently been walking the moors.*

THE CORNISH GAZETTE, SEPTEMBER 1909.

POLICE SEARCH

The Devon and Cornwall Constabulary were called out to find Lucy and Mabel Palmer yesterday. The two girls went missing on Bodmin Moor during a walk with their parents. The police so far, have found no trace of the two girls.

Mr. and Mrs. Palmer and their daughters were staying with relatives in St. Breward on Bodmin Moor, when they decided to go for the walk. Lucy and Mabel, 8 and 10 respectively, strayed too far and have not been seen since.

They were wearing pink and blue, light summer dresses. Residents are keeping a watchful eye for the girls.

KEEPERS' NOTE:-

Mr. Hellicar has not spoken since that fateful night in 1909. He is currently one of the residents at the Sea View Home for the insane, on the coast outside Port Isaac on the North Cornwall coast. Mr. Hellicar responds to absolutely nothing, and has to be hand fed. His family pay for his upkeep. Whenever the sea mist rolls in, Hellicar begins to scream uncontrollably.

THE WESTERN HERALD, JULY 1904.

KEEPERS' NOTE:-

The two girls were never found. Some of the local constabulary that participated in the search, are still on the force. Those that can remember the event, recall that they never really expected to find Lucy and Mabel. The moor is too large to cover adequately.

Accomplished painter, **Lawrence Beard**, was so taken by Bodmin Moor during his stay a week ago, he has decided to move there. Beard, well known for his portraits of fictional characters, says he will continue his work as soon as he has finished moving. He moves to St. Breward tomorrow.

LONDON MERCURY, SEPTEMBER 1919.

KEEPERS' NOTE:-

Mr. Beard has moved to Garrow, not St. Breward as described. During his holiday, he was affected (only mildly) by Devil's Pool, and decided to move closer. He has dropped out of the social art scene completely, but his works now have a far wider audience. His strange, twisted images now adorn the walls of the collectors of the macabre. Lawrence Beard still lives in Garrow, and is described below.

MR. JOHN WEBB has passed away. His funeral will be held tomorrow at the Sea View Home for the Insane at Port Isaac. He will be sadly missed.

THE CORNISH GAZETTE, NOVEMBER 1903.

KEEPERS' NOTE:-

John Webb was put in Sea View after similar circumstances to those surrounding Mr. Hellicar, detailed above. Mr. Webb also had withdrawn into catatonia, and also screamed uncontrollably when the mist rolled in from the sea. Mr. Webb was affected badly by the lake, and had horrific nightmares each night.

BODMIN MOOR

Bodmin Moor encompasses little more than 100 square miles. It is an area of solitude, majestic vistas and unrivalled beauty. Of ancient, they give is not to go anywhere near Devil's Pool, especially at night. Of the seven locals, only three will talk for any length to the players: Lawrence Beard, Father McKenzie and John Dawson - owner of the Garrow Tor.

LAWRENCE BEARD

The youngest, and newest of Garrow's residents, he still paints. His paintings have turned to the macabre since he moved here. Indeed, the players may be familiar with some slumbering countryside steeped in history. Its enthusiasts consider it to be the most beautiful place in Britain. Bodmin Moor (once known more accurately as Fowey Moor) appears in every Cornwall myth and legend: stone circles, granite tors, hut circles, Cheesewring Quarry, Dozmary Pool...

Garrow is a tiny village just below Garrow Tor. To reach it, one must travel to St. Breward. From there you head east, onto the moor, then a rough track to Middle Candra (little more than a farm). From here a path leads past some hut circles (believed to be King Arthur's Hall) to Garrow.

Garrow is not on any maps, and consists of nine houses (two uninhabited and derelict), a small church and an inn. The buildings are made from moorland granite and are all small, well built buildings quite capable of standing up to the savage Cornwall weather. There are no cars in Garrow. A couple of the villagers have horses and they travel between here and St. Breward for supplies, post and news.

There is no-one under the age of sixty living in Garrow. Services are held in the church on Sundays. The small graveyard is full of Garrow people, all elderly. The exception is three unmarked graves of varying ages. Buried here are strangers that died wandering the moor.

The Inn (The Garrow Tor) has only one small room and isn't geared to cater for guests. It comes alive during the evening, when all seven villagers congregate. It is closed Sundays.

The people of Garrow are private folk. They have all been drawn to Garrow for some reason, most don't know why. They never go up to Devil's Pool, it is too dangerous. Strangers to Garrow are always a cause for concern; they are always interested in the lake, and too much interest in the lake is very bad.

Most locals will avoid the players, the only information

of his works. None of his paintings overtly display anything to do with the Cthulhu Mythos, but tend to hint subliminally at things better left unseen.

He welcomes newcomers to his home, and is pleased if they show interest in his (sometimes disturbing) paintings. Garrow is a little cut off, so news is always welcomed.

He will avoid talking about himself, and will warn the players to stay away from the lake. It is better left undisturbed.

Lawrence believes that something lives in Devil's Pool, and at night has nightmares about something rising from its depths. His paintings sometimes reflect his nightmares.

FATHER MCKENZIE

A large genial man, often given to drinking. His profession means he cannot turn away from the players, but it is clear that he would rather avoid talking about Devil's Pool. He considers himself as God's agent, watching over the pool. He is very unlikely to tell the players this, and never goes up to the lake.

The church has records of all who died here (they are buried in the graveyard). The three unmarked graves are recorded as unknown people – evidently people affected by the lake. The rest of the graves are Garrow villagers and the occasional outsider.

JOHN DAWSON

Owner of the Garrow Tor, Garrow's one and only inn. He has a rather limited selection of drinks to offer, he only rarely goes into 'town' to restock. The inn has only one tiny room, accomodation for just one. This is the only place that players can spend the night in Garrow - The locals will not offer rooms for the night.

Dawson is not a happy man and his pessimism spreads. He will foretell that the players will come to tragedy. He tells the players that they will never leave this place and will end up in one of the unmarked graves. He gets worse when he drinks, but never mentions any names or any specifics about the lake.

THE LAKE OF MIST

The lake is about a mile out of Garrow. There is no track or path. After crossing some potentially dangerous marshy ground, the players can reach it.

Perpetually covered in fine, swirling mists, Devil's Pool is an eerie sight. The lake itself is about 200 yards long, and is supplied at one end by a trickling stream. Stagnant pools surround the lake, giving the area a unwholesome smell. There are no birds or animals. The plants seem twisted and unhealthy, the shrunken trees bare and draped with slime-like moss. There is an atmosphere of almost tangible evil and malevolence.

There is nothing mysterious or evil about the pool at all. However, Devil's Pool seems to work on people's imagination, they begin to see things that aren't there. The ordinary trees become alive and festering, marks on the ground become footprints, the stagnant air becomes a loathsome stench. It is all imagination. There are no watchers, there is no great Daemon. Fuelled by reports and their imagination, visitors to the lake believe they see the watchers, see the Daemon. This includes the players.

If the lake is eerie and threatening during the day, then it becomes full of the stuff of nightmares during the hours of darkness. For the players, the lake will act as a catalyst for all their worst nightmares to come to haunt them.

Staying and watching brings terror and madness. The players have enough warnings. If, after the reports of so many people going insane, they still go up to Devil's Pool at night, then they deserve all they get.

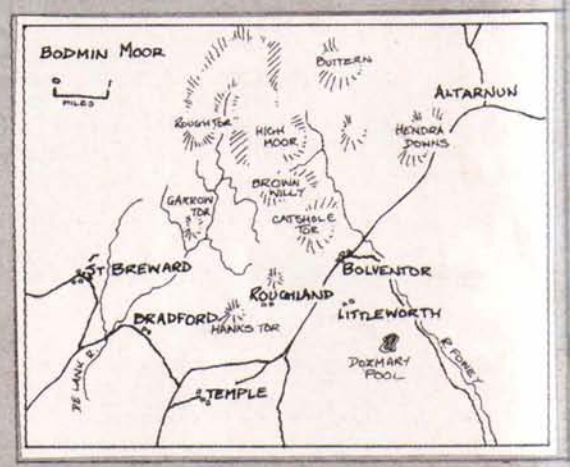
What the players actually see, depends on their previous exploits. It also depends on their expectations. If they have been dealing unsuccessfully with Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath in the past, then one (or more) will come plodding out from the darkness. If they expect in-human guardians, give them in-human guardians. If they expect a great Daemon beneath the waters, then let Mighty Cthulhu heave his greasy bulk out from beneath Devil's Pool.

Give the players what they expect, and make it worse. Human sacrifices, disgusting rituals. People they know are dead, loved ones being disembowelled... No limits.

If the players are so foolish as to fall asleep, then the Keeper can really go to town. While they may be shocked and maddened by what they see whilst awake, at least it is all mental damage. The players are never in any physical danger (although they should not realise it).

While asleep, however, such assurances are gone. The players become the sacrifices, become the disembowelled. Horrific things happen to them time and time again. Let them wake up, think it was a dream, then do it all again. No limits at all...

Should any players survive, they will be haunted by the memories forever. There really is no way to defeat the lake, but then there isn't anything to defeat. The best way of escaping the madness is not to go there. But then, the players were amply warned...



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100 Years on Bodmin Moor :-
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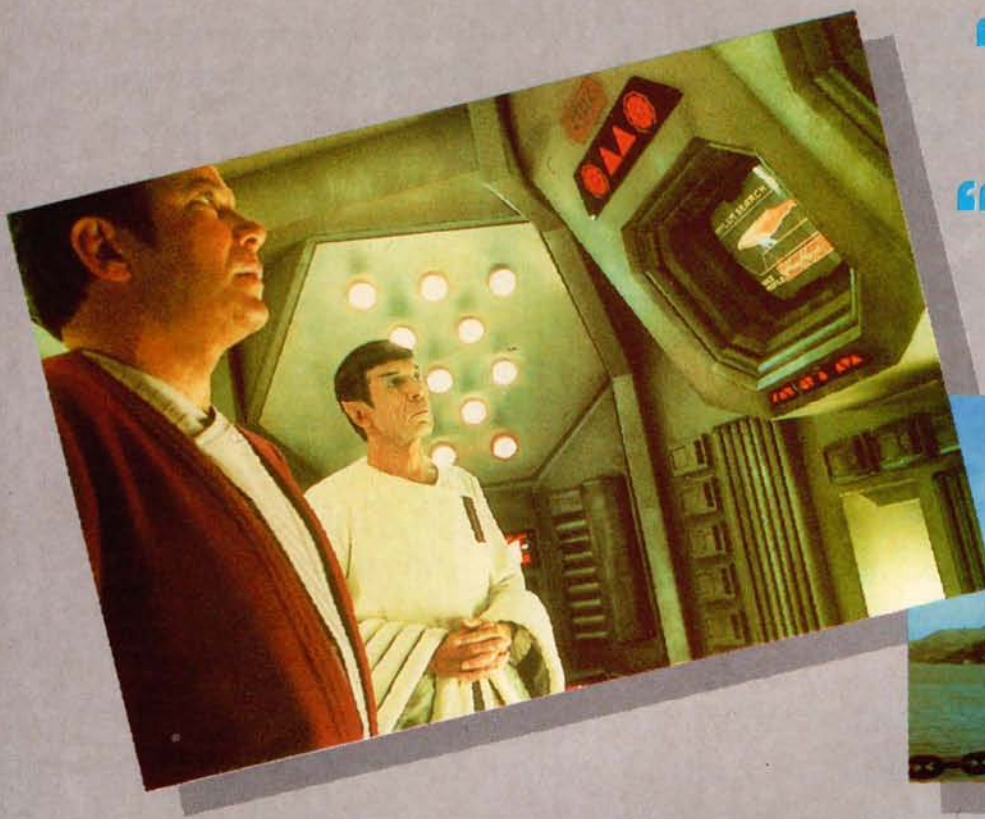
VOYAGES BEYOND

by Wendy Graham



"Spock and Kirk assessing the problem with a little help from their Spectrum Plus"

"Spock, dressed in Hindu garb whilst trying to sell the Captain some dubious merchandise, just because his own bridge is no more!"

HOMEWARD BOUND:

The new film **Star Trek IV: The Way Home** involves an earth-menacing probe which emits a sound something like the call of a humped-back whale, a species which (unfortunately) died off in the 21st. century. So, what options are open to the Star Trek Command? Obvious innit? Spock and Kirk go back in time to the 'primitive' San Francisco of 1986 in search of hump-backed whales to talk with this alien probe. The problems they face in acquiring a couple of whales and transporting them 300 years back to the future is ludicrous enough to guarantee a smash hit. - **Ste Dillon.**

DOCTOR WHO?

The law of libel being what it is in this country, I must be somewhat circumspect in what I write about the new **Doctor Who.**

However, the law does allow we journalists what it calls 'fair comment on matters of public interest', and I think I can safely assume the announcement of a new actor to play Dr. Who is a matter of interest and concern to **Adventurer** readers, so I fearlessly comment with typewriter keys at my fingertips:-

To say that I'm underwhelmed would be an understatement. This **Sylvester McCoy** appeared on an afternoon chat-show just after the announcement that he would be the next Dr. and seemed unable to sit still while being interviewed, and at the end of the programme stood around pulling silly faces at the camera.

The 43-year old actor has reportedly signed a three-year contract with the BBC, and has been quoted as saying he wants to turn the character into a combination of **David Bellamy** and **Magnus Pyke.** Well, fair enough, and I can see those as archetypes for the role- In fact, I could almost see Dr. David Bellamy in the role for a moment if I shut my eyes and imagine hard enough, though I suspect he would have problems with **vegative** alien baddies. However, it seems to me that this actor has the wrong idea of the meaning of the word "eccentric". We are probably all agreed that the Doctor is the merest smidgit eccentric, but I don't think this means he should be pulling faces at TV cameras.

McCoy, who is a 5ft 6in. Scot, used to appear on such children's TV programmes as **Tiswas** and the comedy series **Big Jim** and the **Figaro Club**, and his showbusiness speciality was reported to be stuffing ferrets down his trousers...

GLASS GLOBES:

Back into real space and time, and ten years after the last lunar landing, our own moon is still surprising scientists, I hear. Aparently, they recently opened up yet another core sample brought back by astronauts, and out popped several hollow glass spheres. They've found glass a-plenty on the moon before, but never hollow glass spheres. Perhaps they're used for lunar goldfish?

WORLDCON:

And now, probably the most important event on the calendar for SF in Britain this year- the 45th World Science Fiction Convention is being held in Brighton from August 27 to September 1. Up to 10,000 people attend a Worldcon, held annually at a different location somewhere in the world. This year's event, dubbed **"Conspiracy '87"** has been in the planning stage for two years, since the organising committee beat off opposition from bids from the U.S. and other countries, to host SF's biggest event.

No other genre can match SF in its tendency for like-minded folk to gather together, and at a worldcon, one can expect not only the most dedicated fans from all around the world to be in attendance, but also just about all the professionals, for just about all SF writers attend, plus publishers, agents and even we few SF journalists.

It is usual too for film companies to use Worldcons as a launching pad for new films, bringing along actors, SFX people

and displays.

Some of the highlights of the Brighton convention so far announced include a display of **'50 years of Fandom'**, and one surviving attendee of that 1937 convention will be the fabled **Arthur C. Clarke**, who will be contributing his recollections of the event.

One of (if not the) highest awards in SF literature is the **Hugo Award**, named after Hugo Gernsback, and is the equivalent of an Oscar. These are what might be called peoples' awards, as they are awarded by members of the Worldcon by voting. Among the categories are Best SF novel, novella, short story, artist, media presentation, and many others.

The Conspiracy committee is also hoping to organise performances of works related to SF by theatrical, balletic and operatic companies, in particular they hope to organise the staging of one of the operas based on the work of Guest of Honour **Doris Lessing**.

In a lighter vein, there may even be a firewok display on the seafront!

You're amazed at all this, I can tell, and want more information on how to get involved in such a wonderful event. Never fear, just send a large SAE to Conspiracy '87, PO Box 43, Cambridge, CB1 3JJ. In return, you'll get your registration form and lots of details (Don't forget to mention Adventurer, by the way...). For the six days, you will have to pay something in excess of £25, but I'm not sure what, as I don't have the latest details. Also, there's substantially reduced hotel rates available if you need them. There is a creche available, too, if you're thinking of bringing the little 'uns, and children also get reduced admission. Hope to see you there.

BOOK REVIEWS:

THE FIRST NAMED SERVANTS OF THE ARK: Book One.

By Jonathan Wylie
Published by Corgi.
£2.50. Paperback.

This was the first book of this batch to be reviewed and I skated around it. I really dodged this book; I feinted, weaved, ducked and bobbed. Not another trilogy. Not another book with a magician. Bleaah! Do I have to read it? Must I? But it stayed there, on the 'to-be-read' pile. I spring-cleaned, made cakes, learned to yodel, but it stayed there.

So when I did get around to reading it, what did I do? I looked up in the **Corgi** lists to see when the next part is due out (either August or July this year, depending on what you believe in the Corgi lists...)

The truth is, it isn't too bad, and I quite enjoyed it. The magic isn't **too** magic, the magician is quite human (as are the humans), and it is quite an imaginative tale. I'm not going to go jumping through hoops about it, but it's not too bad, not bad at all. What's it about? The island, Ark, and the struggle between good and bad guys get on in and how the good the struggle.

SUN'S END

By Richard Luposs
Published by Grafton
£2.95. Paperback.

Cross *The Six Million Dollar Man* with *Buck Rogers in the 25th. Century*, and you have the hero **Daniel Kitajama**, who gets biffed by a crane in space in **2009**, and is woken up 80 years later with only his brain (and half the Solar System's industry- thanks to his trustees) to call his own.

I'm sure the end is very meaningful.

ORPHANS OF THE SKY

By Robert A. Heinlein
Published by Grafton
£2.50. Paperback.

First thought- when does a story become a short story? When it is more than 142 and a half pages long, so it seems.

This story has been around for some time, since the first date on its publishing history is 1941, and I had a distinct sense of *deja vu* about it- some of these old tales have been published in so many forms, in anthologies as well as various editions, that it becomes hard to keep track, unless you're a fan of that particular author. If you're a fan of Heinlein, you've probably got this one.

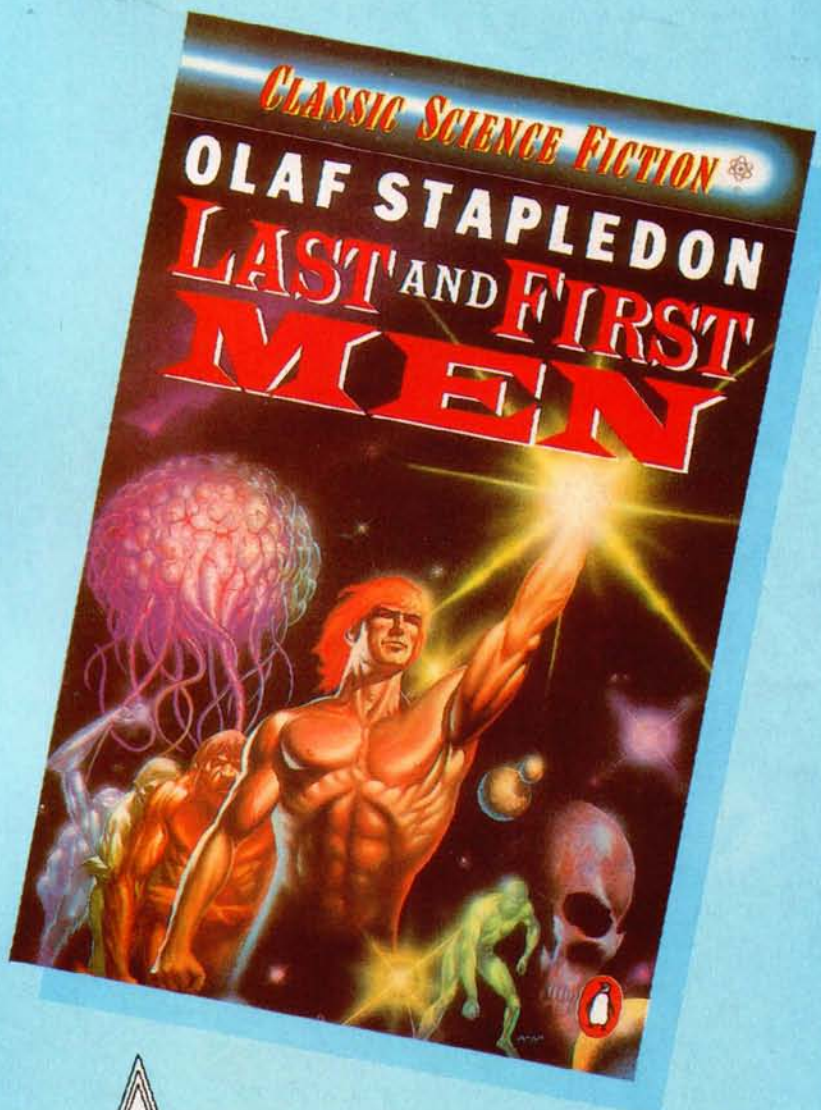
It's a familiar tale- the big spaceship with many aboard who've forgotten they're on a ship, until one or two questioning sparks twig the whole thing and they promptly wish they hadn't. If they're lucky, they survive, if not, they're pronounced nutcases and fed to the engines.

LAST AND FIRST MEN

By Olaf Stapledon
Published by Penguin- Classic SF series
£3.95. Paperback.

This undoubted classic was published in 1930 and has been a major influence on SF literature, both consciously and unconsciously ever since.

For many people, it has been a book of which they've heard a-plenty but never read. And this new opportunity is one which should be taken by all serious SF readers.



Last and First Men is the story of billions of years of man's future. Man mutated, genetically engineered, man ever changing, usually progressing, sometimes regressing.

Stapledon got some things wrong with his own immediate future- our recent past; he didn't have man venturing into space just 30 years later, for example, but in other predictions, he hit the nail right on the head.

This is a hard book to read. Every single word must be read; there can be none of the 'scan and skip' speed reading, and sometimes there is a clumsiness of grammar which necessitates a backtrack to make sense of the sentence.

The jacket cover bears little resemblance to the story, which makes me wonder if cover artists ever read the books they're elected to illustrate.

If Stapledon was living now, this one 327-page large format book would undoubtedly be expanded into a trilogy or more, as at times, millions of years of development are dismissed in a page or two.

I found the story was very gloomy on the whole. We all know that there is much wrong with mankind at present, but there is much about us which gives rise to cautious optimism as well, and Stapledon seems to be overly enamoured of the romantic view that suicide is a noble gesture, both individually and racially at times.

I'm glad I read this book, and will remember more than a one-sentence summary of it, but I'm not sure if I'll ever read it again.

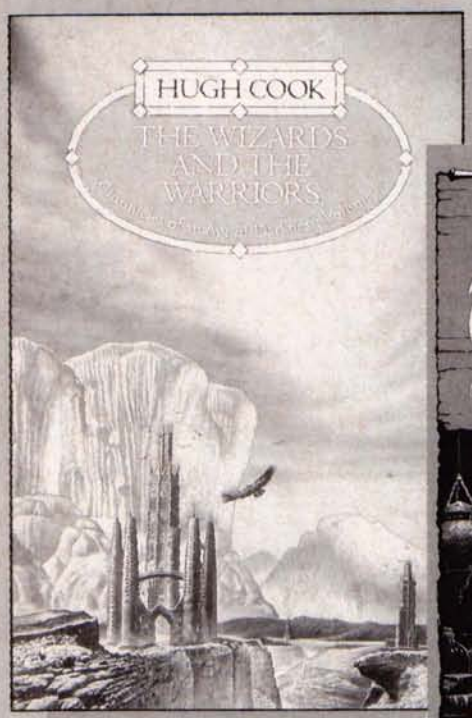
TIME OF THE TWINS: Volume 1 of the Dragonlance Legends
By Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman
Published by Penguin
£2.95. Paperback.

This trilogy is the sequal to the **Dragonlance Chronicles**, by the same authors (in case you didn't know), and picks up soon after the end of the war of the lance. This is the first volume, and details the heroes' attempts to battle with the baddy archmage **Raistlin**.

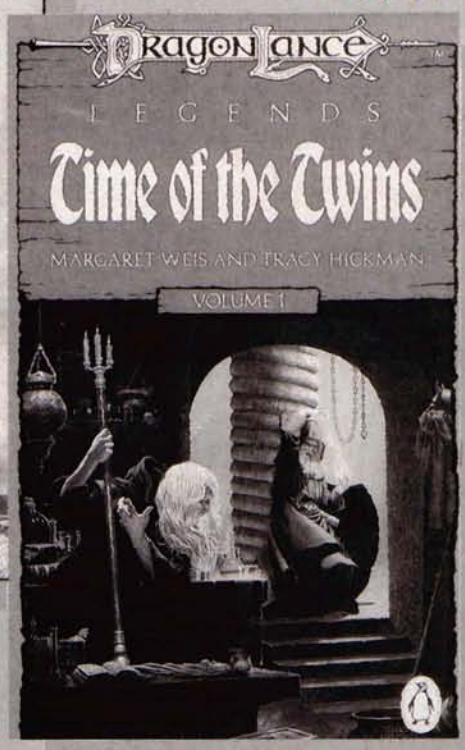
Crysania is a beautiful cleric who promptly falls in love with the baddy, and is convinced she can save him (shades of the *Darth Vader*); **Caramon** is, at the beginning of the book, a drunken slob who used to be a brave warrior (no doubt he's a drunken slob because he is Raistlin's twin brother) and **Tasslehoff** is a Kender, a non-human sort of *Villa* character who ends the book in big trouble.

The cover is fairly awful, but the story isn't bad, considering that I am so tired of magicians and all that stuff. Isn't anyone writing good straightforward SF any more?

The next two parts are due out May 28 and July.



'In the doomed city of Istar- a quest to save not only the world but, more importantly, a soul'



Eikor Alish laughed, harshly: 'A commoncause? Between wizards and the Rovac? Forget it!'

THE COLOUR OF MAGIC COMPUTER ADVENTURE
Produced by Pirhana

The only computer activities in which I can work up an interest are adventure games, and I had high hopes of this game, based on the Terry Pratchett book.

However, I'm sad to report that the digitised version is pretty useless. The programme seemed clumsy and annoying, and long-winded from this side of the keyboard. For example, to converse, you have to enter "Talk to X, say whatever", and there is little provision for what we have come to expect as standard abbreviations.

Playing with book in hand, I still got nowhere very slowly, and a chum to whom I passed the game reported that he didn't think much of it either, and also gave up in vexation very early on. Pity.

THE WIZARDS AND THE WARRIORS: Chronicles of an Age of Darkness: Volume 1
By Hugh Cook
Published by Corgi
£2.95. Paperback.

Judging by the title, this is the kind of fantasy pulp I normally stay well away from. However, once I opened it and began to read (referring to a very poor quality map of the area which I pulled out from the book), I realised the title didn't do it any justice at all. This is a story about personalities, not powers, about people more than politics. Wizards are real, and so are warriors; they each have their strengths and weaknesses, their likes and dislikes, ambitions and conflicts.

A fast-moving book comprised of many climaxes during the tale, which is really about the power and implications of the **Death Stone**, and the struggles to control it, with all the implications of nuclear warfare and its resultant damage and chaos (Political messages were coming through here, but weren't too heavy or prolonged).

There is such a climax at the end of the book that one wonders whether part one of the Age of Darkness won't also be the final part; surely **Hugh Cook** can't top ***that!*** There's no loose ends, no mysteries unsolved, no pieces to pick up.

Hugh Cook's style of writing is very moralistic and romantic; he takes pains over the turmoil caused by **Blackwood's** heightened sensitivity, the guilt of **Morgan Hearst** and the burden of the wizard **Miphon**, who are the three principle characters. If, like me, you love to hate the villain of the piece and see him get what he deserves, you won't be disappointed as there's plenty of 'come-uppance' being doled out!

Perhaps the only real bad point **is** the idyllic preservation of justice and punishment for wrong-doers; it has a sort of adult fairy-tale ending which just doesn't happen in reality. Does it?

Review by **Ste Dillon.**

ORCS NEST

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